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# OBSERVATIONS

ON THE STATE

OF

## POLITICAL

AND

## RELIGIOUS FEELING

IN IRELAND.

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BY THE REV. A. O'CALLAGHAN, A. M.,  
LATE MASTER OF THE COLLEGE OF KILKENNY, AND AUTHOR OF  
"THOUGHTS ON THE TENDENCY OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY," &c.

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"Woe unto them—that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.  
ISAIAH V. 20.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE Writer of the following Observations ventures to lay before the British Public, without disguise, an honest transcript of his own feelings, and convictions, on a truly momentous subject. To serve his fellow-creatures is his wish; truth is his object; and, in its pursuit, he deviates widely from the high road to favour and preferment. The approbation of *any* party religious or political he can scarcely expect; but, by the honest and conscientious individuals of *every* party, he hopes to be, at least, endorsed.

PETER-PLACE, *Dublin*.



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## OBSERVATIONS;

&c. &c.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Unqualified Private Judgment, in expounding Scripture, disallowed by the Church of England, and other Protestant Churches, as well as by that of Rome.—Not the Principle of Protestantism, but quite repugnant to it.—What that Principle really is.—The Doctrine of unqualified Private Judgment repugnant to Reason, Analogy, History, and Experience—highly dangerous.*

FROM one extremity of Ireland to the other, the unqualified exercise of private judgment, in the interpretation of Scripture, is held forth, by many professing Christians, as the great principle of Protestantism. The Bible Society proclaims it in every village, their female disciple in the drawing-room, and the tippling mechanic in the whisky-shop. The pragmatical and presumptuous of all ranks advance it with confidence, as an incontrovertible truth; many persons of real piety

yield it their conscientious assent; while others, who doubt or disallow it in private, apparently glide with the current of opinion, and are content to be silent, that they may be unmolested. Yet, this position so loudly asserted, and confidently maintained, is not true; it is one of those errors which float for ages on the surface of prejudice, while its tendency to sink is counteracted by the violent heavings of that unruly element.

But a little research will discover, that, so far from being the great principle of Protestantism, it is *in direct opposition to it*. The first Reformers, indeed, opposed their private judgment to the public judgment of the Church; and rejected in many instances, her interpretation of Scripture. But every revolution in the Church, as well as in the State, is a temporary violation of a principle of paramount importance—that of submission to legitimate authority. As this principle is the bond of every society, civil or religious, its temporary infringement can only be justified by extreme necessity; and the object of such infringement must be not to subvert, but to strengthen the principle itself, by removing the abuses, which, having taken shelter under its authority, were enfeebling it by rendering it odious. The soundness of the principle has been always recognised by the very authors of the Reformation, or Revolution, who, after having

ejected their monarch, or their clergy, have taken care to re-establish the authority of both, but placed it, generally, in different hands, and with suitable restrictions. The Reformers opposed, in their individual capacities, the encroachments, and imputed errors of the Church of Rome; they encountered her with their own interpretations of Scripture, and forced many of her strong holds; but as soon as they had reformed their respective Churches, they gave the sanction of ecclesiastical authority to the sentiments and doctrine previously deduced from Scripture, by private interpretation. They declared it to be the duty of the newly erected Protestant Church to instruct the faithful, and the duty of the faithful to submit to be instructed, and to derive their religious opinions from the Scriptures of truth, *through the medium* of their appointed teachers. Thus they re-established the rule of submission to authority, which necessity had compelled them to violate. Private judgment, in expounding the Word of God, was interdicted, as an unnecessary and dangerous guide, leading only to public discontent and spiritual anarchy. Its pretensions, however, though disallowed by the Church, have, in every period since the Reformation, been maintained by some learned or turbulent individuals; for what can subdue the pugnacious propensities of theologians, or check the wild flights of fanaticism?

But let us disregard the assertions of individual theologians however learned, and controversialists however dogmatical, and consult the public acts and authorized formularies of the united Church of England and Ireland. Let us appeal at once to the Thirty-nine Articles, which, as every one knows, were agreed upon by the archbishops, bishops, and the whole clergy assembled in convocation, and solemnly confirmed by the King. The twentieth article affirms that "the Church "hath power to *decree* rites or ceremonies and "authority in *controversies of faith*: and yet it is "not lawful for the Church to *ordain* any thing "that is contrary to God's Word written; neither "may it *expound* one place of Scripture that it "be repugnant to another. Wherefore, though "the Church be a witness and keeper of Holy "Writ, yet as it ought not to *decree* any thing "against the same, so besides the same ought it "not to *enforce* any thing to be believed for ne- "cessity of salvation." Here the Church *claims* not only the power of regulating the ritual and ceremonial part of religion, but also authority in determining *controversies of faith*, in "*expounding*" Scripture, and "*enforcing*" points of necessary belief, provided her *decrees*, her *ordinances*, and *enforcements* be agreeable to Holy Writ, as *expounded by herself*, but so expounded that no part be repugnant to another. Thus the Church authoritatively declares herself the arbiter of contro-

versy, and the interpreter of Scripture, from which, and from which alone, she claims the right not only of extracting and framing articles of faith for *all* individuals, whether lay or clerical, but of “enforcing” their acceptance. The public judgment of the Church is evidently set up, and the private judgment of individuals, however wise and learned, as evidently disallowed. For if the Church, exercising her own judgment on various passages of Scripture, expounding them in consistency with each other, (of which she herself is the sole judge,) and thus deriving from them the doctrines of the Christian religion—has a right not only to propound to the people the doctrines so extracted, but to enforce their reception—what room is left for the exercise of private judgment on doctrinal points? If the individual should understand the scriptural passages differently from the Church, and derive from them a different doctrine, he is called upon to suppress or renounce his own opinion, and submit to authority. If he interprets the texts in question as the Church does, he receives the doctrine, indeed, not, however, as the result of his own unassisted judgment, but as the decree of a power to which he is required to submit.

But let it be observed, that the Church did not only claim this authority, but *exerted it in the amplest manner*. All the great questions, whose

discussion had distracted the Christian world, since the time of the apostles, are summed up in the Thirty-nine Articles, while the Church declares *her own judgment*, on each question, according to *her own interpretation* of Scripture. She calls upon all to adopt *her own views* upon all the mysterious, and controverted points of faith—the Trinity, the eternal generation of the Son of God, the personality and procession of the Holy Ghost, original sin, free will, justification, predestination and election, &c. &c. Leaving nothing untouched, she gives a complete summary of Christian belief, grounded on her own exposition of the Scripture, for the benefit of “*all*” his Majesty’s subjects, who are authoritatively required to adopt it, because the Convocation assures them it is “*read in Scripture*” or “*may be proved by it*.” Thus the interpretation of the Bible by private judgment, on every vital point of religious belief, is virtually but completely interdicted. Let it also be observed, that this was done on the maturest deliberation. The Articles, which had been previously agreed upon by the Convocation in the year 1562, were “*deliberately read, and confirmed again, by the subscription of the hands of the Archbishops and Bishops of the upper house, and by the subscriptions of the whole clergy of the nether house in their convocation in the year of our Lord 1571.*”

It has been, however, asserted, or at least insinuated, that the Articles bind only the clergy, but not the laity. But see his Majesty's Declaration prefixed to the Thirty-nine Articles, which he ratifies and confirms as "supreme Governor of the Church." The preamble states that the object of the Articles is to conserve and maintain the Church in the *unity of true religion*, and in the *bond of peace*, and *not to suffer unnecessary disputationes, altercationes, or questiones* to be raised, which may nourish *faction* both in the *Church and Commonwealth*. The Declaration itself follows, containing these decisive words: "the Articles of the Church of England do contain the true doctrine of that Church agreeable to God's word; which we do therefore ratify and confirm, requiring ALL our loving subjects to continue in the uniform profession thereof, and prohibiting the least difference from the said Articles." And afterwards—"from the settled continuance of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England now established, we will not endure any varying or departing in the least degree." Can any thing be conceived more hostile to the principle of private interpretation?

But the Church was not satisfied with a naked speculative assent to her Articles, on the part of the people, but took care to carry them into *practical operation*. Accordingly she has explained

at large many of them in her Homilies, which were *ordered to be read from the pulpit*: their substance is interwoven with every part of the liturgy; it is found in every prayer, in every act of thanksgiving; it is wrought into our creeds, our collects, and our litany; all our offices and church service are grounded upon it. So that it is impossible to renounce the Articles, without renouncing the Liturgy; or to use the Liturgy, without adopting the Articles; both exhibiting the same matter, both being perfectly consistent, both being extracted from the same Scriptures, by the same persons, and by the same *collective* judgment. Our Liturgy, including, of course, our Catechism, is confirmed by public authority. Thus the Church teaches us what to believe, what to pray for, how to pray, and to whom our prayers are to be addressed. She does not, with the Bible Society, say to the faithful, open the Bible, peruse it in the spirit of humility and piety, and you cannot fail to extract from it the pure doctrines of Christianity, by the exercise of your own judgment, without any human assistance. But she says, read the Bible with *unaffected* piety, and *real* humility. In every page, you will find much to exalt that piety, and improve the heart in which it dwells; you will there find mild and humane affections recommended with winning simplicity; angry, selfish, vindictive, and uncharitable feelings, uniformly reprobated; you will find the brand of God's wrath impressed

on every vice, and the stamp of his approbation affixed to every virtue—virtue, which even the heathen sages paint as beautiful, but which the Scriptures exhibit in brighter colours, as not only beautiful but heavenly. You will find precept confirmed by example—the Son of God mercifully condescending to become your fellow-creature, and, in that capacity, spending himself, even unto death, for his fallen brethren ; the prophets, the apostles, and other holy men lavish of life in the service of God, and with an ambition, divinely enlightened, renouncing this world, and all that therein is, for a crown of unfading glory in another. All this the Scriptures will present to your view, in a sufficiently plain and simple form ; this is the province of your private judgment ; here it may range safely and profitably. But if your humility be real, you will proceed to unfold, with becoming diffidence, the points of faith and doctrine delivered in the sacred pages. You will repress the presumption and pride of your nature, and the suggestions of your invisible enemy, which tempt you to rely on your individual judgment, unassisted by the interpreters of God's appointment, who are constantly addressing you in your Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy. To these therefore we refer you. These will give you the deliberate views of the founders of your Church, on all the mysterious points of faith, and conduct

you, in safety, through the depths of divine revelation.

Happy would it be if the Church stopped here ; if she continued to enforce her Articles and Liturgy, by counsel, advice, and spiritual censures, after the example of the primitive Christians. But unfortunately she proceeded to enforce them by persecution in all its various forms—death, torture, imprisonment, banishment, penal-statutes, and civil disqualifications. Happily the four first methods of curbing private judgment have been exploded by the humanity, and growth of mind, which characterize the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Persecution, indeed, is on the wane, throughout the whole Christian world ; it still however “ sheds its disastrous twilight ” on unfortunate and distracted Ireland. To persecution, as an instrument of uniformity, in the hands of our Reformers, I would not willingly allude. But from its introduction into our Church, my argument derives irresistible force, as it proves that the exercise of unassisted private judgment in interpreting the doctrinal parts of Scripture, was, in the opinion of our Reformers, so hostile to the peace and good order of society, and the unity of religious belief and worship, that they punished, with torture, death, and civil disqualification, every departure from their own interpre-

tation of Scripture, as exhibited in their Articles and Liturgy.

What then is the great principle of Protestantism? Unquestionably not the right of private judgment, in the interpretation of Scripture; but that *every national Church is independent of the Church of Rome, and of every other; has a right to declare what is, and what is not the Word of God; and to interpret that word for all within the limits of its jurisdiction.* This is the principle upon which our Reformers acted, after they had emancipated themselves from the extravagant pretensions of the Church of Rome. It is still retained, and acted on, though with diminished vigour, and has produced that system of doctrine, and form of religious worship, which exists at this day. The right of unqualified private judgment is a revolutionary principle. It corresponds to that principle in politics, that men have a right, in cases of extreme necessity, to subvert a government incurably tyrannical. I do not deny the existence of these rights. On the contrary, I rejoice that they are indelibly stamped on our nature, and that neither human power, nor human artifice, can obliterate them. But, surely, they are not the *ordinary* maxims which should regulate our civil or religious conduct. They are the desperate remedies of desperate disorders, not the wholesome food which preserves the religious and

social system in health and vigour. Encourage the mass of mankind to interpret, for themselves, the law either of God or man, and, if they adopt your advice, the utmost licentiousness both of thought and action will, sooner or later, be the inevitable result. If this be not true, history is a romance, and our knowledge of the human heart a gross delusion.

But notwithstanding the zealous labours of our Reformers in framing a scriptural religion for “*ALL*” his Majesty’s subjects, and enforcing its adoption with a rigour more than orthodox, many individuals are found who never cease to extol the Christian mildness, and primitive spirit of our “pure apostolical Church,” which allows the faithful to “think for themselves, and work out their own “salvation according to their own views of scriptural truth.” Her charitable forbearance is contrasted with the “dreadful inhumanity of the idolatrous and persecuting Church of Rome,” which has “impiously dared to chain the private judgment “of God’s intelligent creatures to the inexorable “tribunal of the Inquisition.” So prone are men, in defiance of Scripture, to blazen forth the misdeeds of others, and overlook their own.

But the clergymen of the Established Church, who, as members of the various Missionary or Bible Societies, are labouring for the conversion

of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, surpass all their predecessors, in proclaiming the indefeasible right of private judgment, in direct opposition to the Articles which they subscribe, the Liturgy which they read, and his Majesty's Declaration which they despise. According to them, every labourer who can spell the Bible into either English or Irish, or who unable himself to read, hears it read by another, ought to disengage himself from the trammels of human teachers, and rely on his own unassisted judgment as the proper interpreter. Whoever presumes to doubt the justness of this advice is denounced as the enemy both of God and man. Let their other arguments, such us they are, be deemed conclusive, when they prove, that God, in his Word, has appointed no teachers for his people, or that the collective judgment of these teachers is not more to be relied on, for the interpretation of the doctrinal parts of Scripture, than that of an ignorant peasant; when they prove that the immaturity of judgment, which ever has been, and, at least in a considerable degree, ever will be the portion of the far greater part of mankind, does not render those, whose lot is a life of labour, proper objects of the simplest and plainest instruction in matters of eternal interest; when they can prove, by the evidence of *facts*, the safety of trusting to individual judgment, in opposition to the experience of nearly twenty centuries, whose annals record

the inconsistencies and absurdities of the wise and the foolish, the poor and the rich, the learned and unlearned, the pious and presumptuous, who, in studying the Bible, have resigned themselves to their own judgment, or the supposed influence of the spirit; when they can prove all this clearly, and honestly, without sophistry, casuistry, or equivocation, then, in giving or selling a Bible to the labouring poor, whether readers, spellers, or listeners, they may, with some propriety say "take, read, listen, and think for yourselves, " the private judgment of every individual among "you, aided, as it will be, by the Spirit of God, " is his best instructor." But is this a prudent advice?—Is this a lesson of humility to poor, ignorant, fallen creatures? Is it not rather calculated to quicken into a flame those embers of human pride, which poverty was designed to smother? Does it not assail, with temptation, poor human nature, on its weakest side? Or if the pride of the poor man be subdued by his poverty, if he be lowly and humble, does it not tend to rekindle that pride, and lead him to think that his disregard of the instructions of his appointed teachers is the sure passport to divine aid?

But, with deference to the Bible Societies, we must work out the salvation of our souls, as we do the sustenance of our bodies. In both cases, we must have recourse to the appointed means:—

we must plough and sow, and then, with the blessing of God, we may expect to reap : we must, in perusing the Scripture, have recourse to these human means which God has placed within our reach ; we must suffer our own ignorance to be instructed by the knowledge of others ; we must not forsake the guide that would lead us through the intricacies of the Word ; we must not reject the teaching of those whom our Saviour has appointed to teach us, and whose labours he promised to bless even unto the end of the world. This is the order of nature both in spirituals and temporals. When this is complied with, we may, with humble confidence, expect the blessing of God on our endeavours ; we may expect the aid of his Holy Spirit to remove our doubts, “enlighten “our darkness,” and spiritualize our minds. But to neglect the ordinary, in expectation of the extraordinary means, or advise others to that effect, is repugnant to analogy, reason, and Scripture, and one of the most rash and dangerous flights of enthusiasm.

But, oh ! say the advocates of the Bible Society, we only give the Bible, and leave every man to his own teacher for its explanation. This assertion might do well enough for the rank and file of the Institution ; but if the thing did not occur every day, would it be believed that the general officers and staff of the Society could in-

dulge in such shuffling puerilities? Yes, you give the poor man your Bible, but you give him also the great principle of your confederacy; you refer him to his unassisted private judgment, as the only expositor he can rely on. This favourite maxim—this alimentary principle of pride—this seedling of discord, you endeavour to plant in his mind by laborious and incessant efforts. You press it upon him in the shape of advice, admonition, denunciation, warning, and circulate it more profusely and gratuitously than even the Bible itself. Then you come forward and say you resign the poor for exposition to their respective teachers. If this be true, these respective teachers must be the several unassisted judgments of the poor Bible readers. In this sense it is indeed verbally true, but, as it is an arrant quibble, it is essentially false and deceitful.

Thus we have seen, that the Thirty-nine Articles and the prefixed Declaration of his Majesty, are idle words or waste paper in the judgment of the clerical churchmen of the Bible Societies. But what do they think of our creeds, our collects, our litany, our entire Church Service, and indeed our Liturgy at large? This is a serious question, and charity imperiously forbids its discussion. I shall only say, that, I believe, the piety of many of these gentlemen is unfeigned, and their approbation of most of our formularies sincere; and

yet I cannot reconcile this approbation with their ardent zeal in labouring to persuade the world that the unassisted judgment of every ignorant man is only to be relied on, by him, for the exposition of the sacred records. They know that, led by this guide, millions have already renounced the Book of Common Prayer, denouncing our Church Service as teeming with popish absurdities, or superstitions, and nothing, more or less, than an ill-said Mass in English. They know that thousands of others, in language still more direct and pointed, have pronounced it to be rankly idolatrous. They know that, every year, many persons of every grade in society, and size of intellect, from the lowest mechanic to the man of splendid fortune and profound research, are withdrawing from our Churches, and joining these abhorriers of our Liturgy. They know that all these persons ground their desertion on arguments drawn from Scripture by their own private judgment. That they are governed by *any* views of scriptural truth we might hesitate to believe, if they were men of profligate lives, or if we could trace their conduct to interested motives. But who will say that Price and Priestly led profligate lives, or that they took the road to Unitarianism as the road to preferment and wealth? Who will say that Lindsey was a profligate, or that, by his voluntary resignation of his benefice, he aspired to temporal wealth, and not to everlasting hap-

piness? Have we not seen, in our own time, in one of our own universities, and perhaps the best endowed, two gentlemen resigning their fellowships, their liturgy, with all their prospects of preferment, and repairing, one to the Unitarian Meeting-house, the other to a garret, and a religious system of his own framing? It is true I have heard that some clerical members of the Bible Society, not having before their eyes St. Paul's description of charity, ascribe the conduct of these gentlemen to vanity, to restlessness, to a love of singularity, &c. &c. For my part I do not search so deeply for motives: if I see a man martyred for his opinions, I think him sincere; if I see him resign wealth in possession, and preferment in prospect, I will not call him a hypocrite. Of the two gentlemen alluded to, it may be truly affirmed, that they are both men of great intellectual endowments, and unimpeached moral conduct, and that one of them, at least, unites a primitive simplicity of character to the most humane feelings, and generous sentiments. Now, when we see such men—when we see the good and the learned, the virtuous and the pious, casting behind them all their prospects in life, for what *they judge* to be the truth of the Gospel—when we see them forsaking our Churches, renouncing our Articles, and shrinking from our Liturgy—when we know that this has resulted from their following their own private judgment, or that of

some respected individual, in the interpretation of Scripture, in opposition to the public judgment of the Church—surely it would not be too much to expect, that the clergymen of this Church, who have subscribed these Articles, and administer this Liturgy, should abstain from recommending, at least to their own flocks, a similar interpreter, for fear of a similar result. Indeed, the conduct of the Established Clergy, in adopting and circulating the disorganizing principle of the Bible Society, has appeared, to many reflecting persons, paradoxical in the extreme, and that of the Church in overlooking their conduct still more so.

But where is the Church—the visible Church of the United Kingdom? Oh! it will be said, you may see her in her Articles, her Liturgy, and her Homilies. These I see indeed, but are they a mere bequest, is the testator gone, and his will disregarded? Are they *vox et pretærea nihil*—the mere transcript of the minds of great and enlightened men, who once existed, were once clothed with authority, but whose authority, like themselves, is defunct, who left no successors, no representatives to honour their memories, prove their will, and enforce its provisions. Yes, I see indeed these Articles, and this Liturgy, but I see also many a man calling himself a son of the Church, wearing her uniform, and bearing her commission, labouring with indefatigable pickax

to undermine them. I am far from charging all these gentlemen with intentional treachery, but that the tendency of their great maxim is the subversion of the Church, and the abrogation of its doctrine, I am firmly convinced, and hope I have abundantly proved. This tendency, however striking, is not always perceived by the zealous promulgators of the principle, because zeal is often blind, and enthusiasm never calculates. But if there be a Church, and if that Church can see, and reflect, and calculate, why has she so long neglected to adopt measures of defence adequate to the magnitude of the danger?

This danger threatens with destruction not only the established but every dissenting Church — every Church of every denomination, in the whole Christian world, whose members are united by any regular confession of faith, or fixed system of doctrine. As no two men can think exactly alike, even on plainer subjects than points of Christian belief, the principle of unqualified private judgment, if universally embraced, and pushed to all its legitimate consequences, would, in the progress of its operation, crumble down every Church upon earth, into a number of distinct and repulsive atoms; in which discordant state, every man's house, alone, could be his church, himself alone his congregation, and himself his officiating minister. The Christian world

would be reduced to a state of irretrievable confusion, contradiction, conflicting sentiment, and spiritual jargon. In this chaotic state, every bad passion would be fomented, till at last men may be led to cast the blame of this universal disorganization on the Bible itself, not on their own private judgment, and private presumption, to which they are certainly very partial. If other Churches, then, be remiss or blind, why does not the Church of England, with all her fair pretensions, interfere, by all legitimate means, to rescue mankind, or at least her own children, from this appalling danger?\* Why does she not put her bridle in the mouth, and her fetters on the feet of every Church itinerant orator? Why does she not tell him his wisdom is foolishness, and tear off with authority, or remove with maternal tenderness, that veil of ostentatious piety which conceals the futility of his arguments?

When Mr. Pope and Doctor Singer—men indeed of high character and by far the ablest advocates of the Bible Society, at least in Ireland—when men of this description, dangerous in proportion to their great intellectual and literary caliber, are led away by the prevailing delusion, and not ashamed to tell the world, that “the right of an ignorant labourer to read the Bible, involves his right of interpreting it”—why is the

\* See Appendix, No. 1.

Church silent; why does she not address them by her proper organ, if such still exist, to the following effect—Reverend Brethren, your argument is fallacious, and it is our bounden duty to tell you so. Most true it is, that a poor labourer has a right to read the Bible for the health of his soul, and to bathe in the sea for the health of his body. His right to bathe is as clear as his right to read. We have no objection also, to grant you that his right to go into the water, implies his right to swim in it, if he can. But if he swim very imperfectly, or not at all, we hope you will allow in your turn, that both his prudence and duty ought to confine his unassisted efforts to water not more than chin-deep; into greater depths he ought not to plunge, without the support of a cork-jacket, or some other buoying machine. But suppose him an accomplished swimmer; still, the fear of the cramp and the shark, by which so many lives have been lost, ought to teach him a lesson of caution, and secure him from a presumptuous contempt of danger. By the cramp and the shark, we mean to typify the pride of our nature; that inordinate self esteem, by which the judgment of the ablest man is often contracted, or swallowed up in his inquiries after divine truth. The rest of the application is quite obvious; we leave you, reverend brethren, to make it yourselves; and hasten to furnish you with another illustration of the foolish-

ness of your argument, and hope with divine grace, it will make a due impression upon you.

A country gentleman is threatened with a law-suit. His adversary grounds his proceedings upon a certain statute. The party threatened is naturally impatient to see that statute, and procures it in haste. He knows he has a right to read it, and also, if he can, to ascertain its meaning by exercising his judgment upon it. With this view, accordingly, he reads it, and forms his opinion ; but as his estate is at stake, he begins to think it possible that his own judgment, on which he had hitherto rested with much confidence, might misunderstand the import of the statute. He consults his lawyer, who gives the act an interpretation different from his own. This nettles the squire ; he warmly argues the point in his own way, with the lawyer, affirming that he himself can read as well, and that his judgment is as good as that of any counsellor of them all. That may be, says the lawyer, but my opinion is formed on the decision of the Court of King's Bench, which alone gives the true interpretation of the statute. The squire thinks once more, of his estate and his late improvements, suffers his judgment to be informed by that of the Court of King's Bench, takes his measures accordingly, and saves his estate. We beseech you, also, reverend but deluded brethren, to give the world a proof of your

penitence and humility, by imitating the example of this lawyer, who founded his opinion on the decision of the court, and to assure the people of your own persuasion, and especially the poor and ignorant, that the framers of our Articles and Liturgy are really better interpreters of Scripture than labourers, or tradesmen, however dexterous at the spade, the trowel, the shuttle, or the chisel. Recommend to their imitation, the conduct of the squire, who, though once as self-sufficient, and high in his own conceit, as any male or female admirer of the Bible Society, yet humbled himself when his acres were threatened, and submitted to be guided by the judgment of the proper tribunal. Exhort each of them to follow his example, without tergiversation or delay, assuring him, in the language of simplicity and truth, that life is short, that a man's soul is more valuable than his land, and the frown of him who fixes its doom, more formidable than that of the Lord Chief Justice.

Such a rebuke as this might check the career of these spiritual pioneers, who are gradually sapping the foundations laid by our Reformers. But the Church, as a great authoritative spiritual body, determined to support her doctrines against the subterraneous approaches of a wily and persevering foe, is no where to be seen. We trace her, indeed, not only in her doctrines, and the

ministrations of her servants, but through all the variety of her secular operations : every day we behold her receiving her rents ; levying her fines ; collecting her tithes ; and enforcing the decrees of her courts. But we see her only in detail : we do not see her in her collective wisdom, in synod or convocation, investigating the causes which retard the progress of divine truth under the pretence of promoting it, rebuking the wild theology, and absurd policy of her restless, meddling, and fanatical ministers, and protecting the doctrines of Cranmer and Latimer from the dark and insidious machinations of her spouting zealots, and licentious theorists. These men are not novices in the trade ; they are skilful artists. They do not directly and professedly attack the articles of our faith. They make no rash avowals. They know that such direct attack could be repelled in the ordinary way, by laws already made and provided. Methods so vulgar, so clumsy, so unpromising, they reject, and proceed cautiously, slyly, and indirectly, to the consummation of their object, masking their operations with professions —so help them God—of the most ardent and devoted attachment. Many of them, I have no doubt, are artless and sincere, but their sincerity is as dangerous as the treachery of their comrades—the mighty enchanters who grasp their invisible weapons, and aim their blows with hands shrouded in darkness. New measures should be

devised to restrain these men, if no others are applicable, as no reflecting man of a cool head, and honest heart, can deny, that their proceedings strongly tend to subvert the Establishment, and, what would be a far more serious evil, to pluck up by the roots the religion of the country. But if no convocation will deliberate, if old laws, or old canons are inefficient, and no new ones are to be made, the majority of his bishops might, at least, advise his Majesty, as "supreme governour of the Church," to issue *another* Declaration commanding, or exhorting his "loving subjects"—the clerical members of the Bible Societies, to retract their great principle of pride and presumption—the unqualified right of private judgment. The royal influence, if not the royal authority, might reach the consciences of some of these gentlemen, and their eloquence might hereafter be employed in conveying to the laity lessons of humility, instead of intoxicating strains of presumptuous self-deception. No such advice, however, appears to be in the contemplation of his Majesty's spiritual advisers. Into the cause of this supineness I do not at present inquire.

## CHAPTER II.

*The Doctrine of unqualified private Judgment inconsistent with the legitimate Authority of a Christian Church.—The Rights of Conscience and the Authority of the Church easily reconciled.—Persecution a dreadful Abuse of Power.—Authority, as a ground of Assent, too much depreciated by the Reformers, and unduly magnified by Roman Catholics.—Ought to be regulated, not extinguished.—Respected by Cicero.*

I AM not the advocate of ecclesiastical domination, or of any principle tending to fetter the intellectual powers, or abridge the rights of conscience. These rights, on the contrary, I have ever regarded as sacred, and the development, and improvement of the faculties, as their best preservative. Ecclesiastical usurpation I reprobate as the great evil principle which has obstructed for so many ages, that moral improvement which Christianity was so eminently calculated to produce. But as a Christian, I am a friend to the legitimate authority of a Christian Church,—an authority derived from above, the limits of which are easily ascertained by attending to the nature of a religious association, the wants and infirmities of man, and the practice of the primitive Christians. The component parts of a Church are the congregation and its pastors. The duties of the latter are to teach, and consequently

to interpret, to instruct by precept and example, to exhort, to encourage, and sometimes to rebuke, to be instant in season and out of season, to administer the sacraments, to counteract the allurements of sin, by showing how mean, and wretched, and meagre, are the enjoyments it affords, compared with the exalted and permanent happiness which awaits the children of God in the next stage of their existence. The duties of the former are to open their hearts and minds to instruction—to avail themselves of their opportunities of learning what it is they owe to themselves, their neighbours, and their God,—the degraded state of human nature, with the mighty and merciful means of its redemption,—to show forth in their lives, humbly and unostentatiously the purity of the doctrines they profess—and never to abandon the “means of grace and the hope of glory.” But to enforce these important duties, or at least their external observance, some degree of authority is evidently necessary; otherwise there would be no fixed rules for regulating the proceedings of the body at large, or the belief and practice of its members; there would be no order, no regular discharge of duty, no permanent bond of union.

Man has a soul to be saved as well as a body to be nourished and protected. The soul is endowed with faculties capable of indefinite improvement, especially judgment, that faculty which

investigates truth by the application of moral evidence. Those branches of human knowledge, which admit only of that evidence, are the legitimate field for its exercise—as political economy—law—history—philosophy of the mind—politics, foreign and domestic—government, morality, but, above all, religion both in its evidences and interpretation. Now, it is quite certain, that a man who has acquired a general acquaintance with all these branches of knowledge, is much better qualified to become a thorough proficient in either, than he who has always confined himself to that one alone; because their variety strengthens and enlarges the mind; because they touch each other in so many points, afford mutual illustration, and rest on the same species of evidence. In short, judgment can acquire correctness and strength, in any considerable degree, only by much and various reading, followed up by extensive and attentive observation. There was a time when Newton was an intellectual driveller, when the porter who bears, with firm step, a load of two hundred weight, could not lift an ounce. Can it be said, with truth, that the Philosopher and the Porter, in their infancy, were endued, the one with strength, the other with judgment? Certainly not. These powers, for which they were afterwards so highly distinguished, existed only as mere *seminal* principles. Repeated exercise, and wholesome food for the mind in the one case, and for the body in

the other, gradually developed and matured these principles, till the load was triumphantly borne, and the secrets of nature laid open.

Had the lot in life of these men been reversed, the porter, indeed, by any mental culture, might not become a profound philosopher ; but Newton would probably be less fit for investigating the sense of the more difficult parts of Scripture, than a smart apprentice in an apothecary's shop. A life of labour, to which the great majority of men are consigned, while it gives strength to the body, generally precludes the possibility of mental cultivation. Their judgment never arrives at maturity. Of such persons the congregations of Christians are generally composed, and to them the instruction of regular teachers is indispensably necessary. With bodies of full growth they are children in judgment. To manage such disciples, to teach them what to believe, and what to practise, to convey this instruction, in its various and most efficient forms, surely requires some authority ; but this authority must be parental. It must be remembered, not only that they are children, but that they are full grown children. They must be allured, advised, exhorted, sometimes rebuked, but never whipped. The rod of ecclesiastical authority is a spiritual rod, it may lash the mind, but not the body. The civil magistrate will visit the body, with his inflictions, when its acts are unjust,

or criminal ; but the ecclesiastical superior should have nothing to do with the body, but to relieve it. To the soul only his empire extends, which he should endeavour to cultivate, to reclaim, and fit for eternity by all the gentle methods of persuasion ; when these fail, by spiritual censures ; when these also are ineffectual, and the offence gross and contagious, by exclusion from the communion of the faithful.

Thus far, and no farther, does the legitimate authority of a Christian Church extend. It has no right to visit erroneous opinions, in religion, with temporal penalties. This is a prerogative which neither Church nor State are, by the law of God, authorized to exercise. The attempt would be equally impious, and ineffectual. No legislative enactments can check the reasonable curiosity of man, or even his propensity to indulge in forbidden speculations, on a subject of such paramount interest. He must, often, be wise above what is written ; he will for ever persevere in his attempts to pluck its forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge, though it proves, too often, to be an apple of discord. For, when men presume to discuss subjects above the reach of the human understanding, above the ken of their senses, and but partially revealed, or not at all, no coincidence of opinion can be expected. One man has as good a right, as another, to indulge in daring

conjecture, or sturdy dogmatism. All moderation is lost in the conflict of opinions, and the combatants agree in nothing but in detesting each other. It is only the weariness of the parties that can end the dispute ; as the mysterious nature of the subject, and the imperfection of our faculties, would render it interminable. Each man thinks he has discovered what God has concealed, and gives his opinions as a supplement to Revelation. His adversary presents us with a different view, equally imaginary, and equally positive. Argument is succeeded by invective, each unsparingly loading his adversary with opprobrious epithets, or malicious insinuations. But the worst feature in the case is, that each of the dogmatizing doctors accompanies his bitterest denunciations with a solemn assurance that they emanate from a spirit of charity amiably bent on rescuing a deluded soul from perdition.

Such are the scenes which have disgraced the Christian world for so many centuries, and disgrace Ireland at present. The morality of the Gospel utterly forgotten in a zeal for torturing, and distorting its doctrines—doctrines, the pure, simple, scriptural enunciation of which is insufficient for theological profundity, or presumption. On the most confined scriptural area, the spiritual architect erects his metaphysical temple, and calls upon his astounded adversary to wash off his pol-

lutions, and enter the sacred edifice. But, why should architects, working up such intangible materials, be either favoured or punished by a sober Legislature ? If they conscientiously believe they are doing the work of God, when they brandish their syllogisms, and discharge their volleys of invective, why punish them ? If they are actuated by a malignant wish to injure their adversaries, as "words break no bones," they are beneath the notice of the Legislature, which ought to take cognizance only of overt acts. If they are actuated neither by love of God, nor hatred of man, they are mad ; but, as this madness is only metaphysical, the bleedings or strait waistcoats of political physicians are surely unnecessary. Their motives are invisible, except to God ; and of their doctrine, he only with certainty can discern the truth or falsehood ; therefore, of their motives and doctrine he should be the sole judge. In this age, the humanity of the Gospel has made considerable progress, and the descendants of persecutors, in many instances, detest the persecution, even in its most mitigated form, and are ready to consign it to that hell in which it originated.

*Let the Church then assert her inherent spiritual authority ; let the State confine her to that, and by disclaiming all right of interference, allow to every subject equal and unrestricted liberty of conscience, and then the legitimate rights of private judgment,*

and of the Church, will both be established on their *true basis*. A Christian Church, as such, must have an inherent authority to interpret, to instruct, to admonish, to rebuke ; while the duty of the faithful, whether educated, or uneducated, is to hear her voice with unfeigned respect. But the duty of the uneducated is, also, to embrace her doctrines with cordial assent, and gratitude to God, for having vouchsafed to grant them an organ of instruction so suitable to their wants. The man favoured by providence with a good education may, indeed, on Protestant principles, bring any doctrine of his Church to the test of Scripture, and withhold, or withdraw his assent, *should his conscience revolt against it, on full and fair examination*. His faculties are matured ; he has, perhaps, as ample means of information as the Church herself ; that Church disclaims infallibility ; his conscience is alarmed ; he may judge for himself.

But where are we to draw the line between the educated and uneducated ? What graduated scale shall determine the degrees of knowledge and talent which justifies a man in dissenting from his Church ? This question concerns only the individual himself. You can draw no such line ; you have no such scale ; and therefore you have no right to interfere. Establish liberty of conscience on its broadest basis, and the problem is solved to every *practical* purpose. The Church,

when commissioned to teach, was not empowered to employ compulsion; but merely to address men's understandings and hearts. If the individual addressed, whatever be his place on the scale of mental strength or weakness, will not hear her voice, he must answer for his conduct not to erring man, but to the great Searcher of hearts. But though the ignorant man, also, who might oppose his scanty rudiments of thought to the judgment of the Church, ought not to be visited with temporal penalties, why should he be *exhorted* or **ENCOURAGED** to think for himself, and interpret for himself, that is, frame articles of faith for himself. This doctrine strikes at the root of that ecclesiastical authority, which Christ has given; and those who hold it ought to speak out at once, and denounce the Church as a nuisance which ought to be abated, and its revenues appropriated to the liquidation of the public debt, or relief of the perishing poor.

The truth is, that the kind and degree of authority, already stated, is essential to a Church, and is sanctioned only by spiritual censures; more than these is usurpation, and an unwarrantable assumption of that temporal power which Christ disclaimed, and which the civil magistrate only should exercise. On the other hand, when Government interferes with men's thoughts, while the overt acts are innocent, when it sits in judg-

ment on their religious opinions, while their conduct is blameless—visiting them with penalty, or privation of any common right,—this is an awful invasion of the authority of the great Searcher of hearts, whose exclusive prerogative it is to sit in judgment on intellectual aberration.

Yet how often is this done, and done at the instigation of those whose bounden duty it is to raise their voice in humble supplication against it? Or, will it be said, that it is not the duty of preachers of the Gospel to remonstrate, when they see men “clad in a little brief authority,” assuming powers more than human,—when they see the feeble and fallible governors of states placing themselves on the tribunal of the OMNISCIENT GOD, and fulminating their decrees against the consciences of their fellow-creatures? But how deep is the guilt of those ministers of the Gospel, when, instead of endeavouring to lay this persecuting spirit, and promote peace and good will among men, they call it into action, by all the means, direct, and indirect, in their power. This guilt, so foul and deadly, admits still of aggravation, when these same ministers of the Gospel of Peace slyly insinuate, or boldly announce, to the rulers of nations, that this violation of the rights of conscience tends to the honour of God, and the maintenance of true religion. Surely this is not only great wickedness, but great

inconsistency. But how does the wonder grow, when we make the application to the lay, and especially, the clerical members of the Bible Society, who belong to the Established Church. These gentlemen broadly affirm that every man, however ignorant, has a right to interpret the Bible for himself. This undeniably includes the right of deriving, from that interpretation, his system of faith and worship. In the innocent exercise, therefore, of this right, no individual, or public body, can have a right to disturb him, either by impairing this privileges as a citizen, fettering his industry, mulcting him in his purse, or injuring his person. Yet many of these gentlemen, who are circulating their Bibles in every quarter of the globe, and making that circulation the vehicle of their own speeches, their own praises, and that of their heaven-favoured Institution—many of these gentlemen, regardless of every precept of Gospel charity, and forgetful of their own great and leading principle—the inalienable right of private judgment,—are hostile to the removal of that remnant of penal infliction, which still attaches to their fellow-subjects, and fellow-christians of a different persuasion! Some of them, I am informed, are high in his Majesty's confidence; but, of course wickedness and inconsistency never ascend to the high regions of office. There, political expediency, a phrase of universal application, and pregnant with sound sense, or

useful nonsense, as the occasion may require, strips vice of its deformity, and inconsistency of its contradictions.

How, indeed, shall we account for the vicious inconsistence of the clerical Church Members of the Bible Society; who tell their ignorant fellow-creature that he ought to interpret the Bible for himself; but if his interpretation be wrong, *id est*, differing from their own, then tell parliament, or the member of parliament, that he ought to be degraded in society, or to remain so, and be deprived of the common rights of a British subject. Surely this is too heavy a penalty to be imposed on a mistaken interpreter, by a Biblical Christian of superior pretensions to sanctity! But it has been said that this inconsistency and inhumanity are sanctified by some unseen influence, shed from the high regions above-mentioned, on the dignitaries of the Bible Society, then descending on the rectors, and, with accelerated velocity, on the curates. This may be true, to a certain extent; but their conduct is also influenced by another cause of a more general operation, which may be noticed hereafter.

Oh! but, say the Biblical enemies of emancipation, the Roman Catholics do not interpret the Bible for themselves, or, indeed, read it at all, but "take their religion on trust:" and, therefore,

with respect to them, we are not inconsistent. If the charge were true, in its full extent, it could not justify persecution in its mildest form. But, like most of the declamation of the day, it is nothing but falsehood thinly varnished with truth. The Roman Catholics of Ireland are as well supplied with Bibles, as the Protestants of England were before the Bible Society existed. Indeed the members of this holy alliance have repeatedly told us, in their sophistical slang, that there prevailed among the Protestants, as well as the Catholics, "a great dearth of the Word of God." If they had told us that there prevailed, and still prevails, among both, a great dearth of that piety and practice, which the Word of God inculcates, this, unfortunately, might be too true; but true with respect to the inhabitants of every country and of every religious persuasion. But the phrase implies, and was intended to insinuate, that the knowledge of God's Word, and of religious truth and practice, is commensurate with the circulation of the Bible,—an assertion which goes to undermine the Churches of Christ,—which is refuted by general experience,—by the sound creeds, and exemplary lives of thousands of Protestant and Catholic cottagers in every age—by the example of the primitive Christians who were faithful, unto death, before either Gospel or Epistle was written—and, strange to say, by the printed and published documents of the Bible Society itself.

Indeed, at this day, after this presumptuous Association, whose labours and success have been placed in competition with those of the Apostles, has, for a quarter of a century, attracted the admiration of the ladies—scattered its Bibles among the nations—addressed them in “great swelling words of vanity”—squandered a million of money and fifty millions of speeches,—after all this, it is quite easy to point out many persons who have Bibles in their houses, but the world and its vanities in their hearts; and, thanks be to God, it is not difficult to point out some few, at least, who practise their duties to God and man, without reading the Bible, having derived their knowledge of both from their Prayer Books, their formularies, and the lips of their teachers.

But the Roman Catholics of Ireland are not so destitute of Bibles as the Bible Society pretend. All their laity in the upper, and very many in the middle rank of life, have the Bible in their own version, and can argue from it too, perhaps, sometimes, too plausibly for the logic of a Bible distributer. And, in reading the Bible, who can say, with truth, that the private judgment of their educated men is in abeyance. The authority of their Church has, unquestionably, great influence on their religious belief. But, is it credible, that, if the Scriptural proofs, of the infallibility claimed by that Church, were found to be unsatisfactory,

the educated Catholics of the present age would rest, with such confidence, on her decisions. Or, if they found the charge of idolatry substantiated by Scripture, can it be supposed, that they would not renounce it with horror? They know what idolatry is as well as the Bishop of Chester. They are as well aware of the dreadful denunciations against it. They have no sacred grove of Daphne, they celebrate no festivals of a Popish Venus, or a Popish Bacchus; why, then, adhere to the idolatry, without the idolatrous gratifications? On their views of Scripture, they are convinced that their opinions and practice are innocent, and that the idolatry, charged upon them, exists only in the impure imagination of their defamers. Would they not renounce the creed of their Church, and spurn her authority, if they did not find both confirmed by their own interpretation of the Scriptures?

Why does Mr. O'Connell, laying aside his capacities of barrister and demagogue, argue, from sundry passages of Scripture, with the address of a special pleader, in support of Transubstantiation, against the Rev. Mr. Daly; why does he, in the same cause, erect a battery, on the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, against the well-furnished head of that stubborn controversialist? Because, not only the authority of his Church, but his own private judgment, assure him that Scripture

is in his favour; otherwise he would renounce his Popish errors, and receive the cleansing benediction of the Archbishop of Dublin. There is nothing to deter, but much to invite him. In Ireland, wretched though she be, there is no inquisition, no stake for burning heretics; but there are silk gowns, law offices of great trust, and honours in abundance. I say, then, that he, and thousands of other educated men, are kept firm in their creed, in opposition to their worldly interests, partly by the authority of their Church, but, principally, by the conviction of their own private judgments in interpreting Scripture. As to the uneducated class, they rest entirely on the authority of their authorized teachers, and they are right. The influence of authority, even on the *learned of every religious profession*, is greater than is generally acknowledged, and that influence is oftener salutary than otherwise.

In illustration of this, let us suppose a case, which not unfrequently occurs, especially among those who intend to take orders in our Church. A young gentleman, whose mind is well stored with general information, is determined to direct his studies to one particular object—the Bible, because it professes to be the Word of God, and he is resolved not “to take his religion on trust.” This resolution the Bible Society applauds, and I certainly do not condemn. But here, a diffi-

culty occurs *in limine*. He is about to study the Word of God : but how does he know that there is a God, or that the Bible is his Word ? It is true, his parents and teachers told him so, the whole Christian world told him so ; but he is not to "take *his* religion on trust," but particularly the existence of God, the first article and foundation of all religion. To the proofs of this great article he accordingly proceeds. He opens and reads the book of nature, he reads and weighs the arguments *a priori* and *a posteriori*, and is convinced that the world was not mistaken in affirming that there is a God. But it occurs to him that a just judge will hear the advocates on both sides, and therefore he thinks it but fair to ascertain what the Atheists have to say for themselves. This, also, I do not deny that he has a right to do, though I think it rather a work of supererogation. While he is perusing Spinoza, and the other Atheists, the tempter is present, gives a false gloss to their arguments, and excites in the mind of our student, some doubts, if not of the existence, at least of the providence of God. He passes, again, in review, the arguments on both sides, and feels his doubts, though somewhat diminished, are not entirely dispelled, till, at last, he reflects that the arguments against Atheism were conclusive in the view of the best and most enlightened men of all ages, and nations ; and thus the weight of authority, added to abstract

argument, fixes him firmly in the belief of a superintending providence.

But matters are not yet ripe for the commencement of his Scriptural studies. He cannot yet open his Bible, at the first chapter of Genesis, without violating the rights of *private judgment*, which extend, as unquestionably to an examination of the authenticity of the Scriptures, as to their interpretation. He must "judge for himself, and not take his religion on trust." Besides, it will naturally occur to him that the Roman Catholics affirm that the Bible is from God, which forms a strong presumption against it, for what "good Protestant" in our days, would believe the word, or even the oath of a Papist? Immediately Paley, Priestly, Lardner, Letters of certain Jews to Voltaire, &c. &c., are thrown open, read, considered. Their arguments are found irresistible. Conviction is complete. But the Deists—not to hear them would be to refuse full scope to private judgment, and call upon it to decide upon *ex parte* evidence. Forthwith Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, *cum multis aliis*, are bought, begged, or borrowed. The Essay on Miracles staggers our student, but Campbell restores his equilibrium. St. John makes some impression, which further consideration nearly effaces. But Voltaire—how lively, how airy, how elegant! what wit, what point! how terse, how dense, how

sententious, how vigorous ! Many of his misstatements, and fallacies, however, are soon detected ; but can so fine a genius be always wrong ? And Rousseau too—that child of nature, of sentiment, of generous feeling ! is he never right ? Thus some doubts are engendered, till at last he perceives he is resting not on the arguments of Voltaire and Rousseau, but on their reputation, their literary splendour, their fascinating style—*id est*—on the mere authority of two polished infidels. Then he says, my private judgment deliberately opposes, to the authority of these two foppish philosophers, the authority of all the great masters of reason, who have triumphantly pleaded the cause of revealed religion, from the day of the crucifixion to the present. The cloud is instantly dissipated ; and the arguments of Paley, Lardner, and Priestly, act on his mind with full force.

At last he takes down his Polyglot Bible, with his Greek and Hebrew Lexicons, consults all the commentators on the controverted points, weighs their respective arguments, till his judgment, thus furnished with ample materials to work on, and duly informed, pronounces its decision. But having devoted much and severe application to the study of the Scripture, a new field opens for the exercise of his private judgment. The Books called Apocryphal the Roman Catholics insist are

canonical: this, though with some hesitation, the Protestants deny. Thus a new and arduous investigation awaits our student; for if the books in question be the Word of God, they ought to be read with the same reverential care as the other Scriptures, but neither their reception or rejection ought to be "taken on trust." Accordingly libraries are ransacked, Councils, Fathers, and fragments are consulted, and all his intellectual powers are brought to bear on the subject, till his mind is made up at last, and yielding to the invitation of a friend, he posts off to the country for the benefit of his health. How often are men thus rescued from infidelity by the aid of authority brought up in support of their reason?

Now every man, of an highly cultivated mind, has surely a right to enter upon such a course of reading as I have described. But is it accompanied with no danger? A man may have a right to undertake a voyage to Calcutta, yet, though a skilful navigator, and dexterous swimmer, he may be cast away, and perish in the passage. Surely, then, when the mind launches into the boundless ocean of controversy, it requires more than an ordinary degree of judgment to steer the frail bark into the harbour of truth, through all the rocks of blasphemy, which tower above, or lurk beneath the surface; while the passions, those fascinating

syrens, are perpetually inviting the unsuspecting mariner to his destruction. And are the perils of such a voyage to be encountered by the Irish labourer, or English operative, who can do little more than name the letters of his alphabet, connect them into syllables, and run them into words, —a process tending, perhaps, as little to improve the judgment as any other mechanical operation? I answer, without hesitation, that such a man ought not to encounter such perils. Yet if he ought not only to read, but to interpret the Bible for himself, lest he should “take his religion on trust,” he ought also, and for the same reason, examine all the arguments for and against the existence and attributes of God, all the arguments for and against Revelation, all the arguments for and against the canonicity of the books called Apocryphal. Was there ever an absurdity more startling than this? The truth is, that the great mass of mankind have a much better guide, in matters of religious belief, than their own private judgment in expounding Scripture, and estimating the force of conflicting arguments. The whole Christian world assures them that there is a God, who has created and governs the world; that he has given a revelation of his will; that the Scriptures are that revelation, and that he has commissioned an order of men “to teach all nations” by declaring and expounding those Scriptures.

But suppose no such order of men had been created, no such commission issued, it would still be quite clear, that, by the divine arrangement, knowledge and experience were intended to direct ignorance and inexperience, and that those whose reasoning powers are feeble, and whose judgment is immature, should take the benefit of the ripened faculties, and acquired information of the more fortunate portion of their species. From the former, the latter derive the necessaries and luxuries of life, and should give them, in return, advice, information, with such moral and religious culture as is suited to their condition. Of abstract reasoning, accurate deduction, metaphysical inquiries, so copiously employed by the leaders of contending sects, the sons of labour know nothing. That these leaders should contend for the prize of truth, and that the sons of labour should receive it at their hands when won, or supposed to be won, is the law of our nature. This law the Bible Society and their advocates are labouring to repeal, and to set up in its place a compound principle, equally partaking of the anarchy of private judgment, and the infallibility of inspiration. But in defiance of these sages of the nineteenth century, authority has always been one of the great guides of life, both in spirituals, and temporals, and will continue to be so, till human nature is changed. Men will still be guided, in general, by the opinions of those whom

they think wiser than themselves. Except in private matters of mere domestic concern, and even sometimes in these, authority, to the great mass of mankind, is the substitute for private judgment. The same ignorance, which qualifies them for the admission of the former, disqualifies them for the exercise of the latter.

Oh ! but this is all Popish and unphilosophical. I care not whether it be Popish or not, provided it be true ; and, convinced of its truth, I am accordingly persuaded, that the fairest character of philosophy is stamped upon it. That religious feuds and controversial asperity have extended a corrupting influence to philosophy itself appears in this, as in other instances, that the Reformers unduly depreciated authority as a ground of assent, while the Roman Catholics as unduly magnified it. This will still be done, while both parties are impelled by the blind fury of controversy ; but when their ammunition is spent, and they mutually pant for rest, then they will discover, that not only the cause of truth, but their own permanent interests call upon them to acknowledge, that authority is an indispensable rule of sentiment and conduct, recognized both by our instincts, and our reason, but that it should be confined to its legitimate sphere, and the limits of its influence distinctly marked.

These limits the friends of truth should endeavour to ascertain, and struggle no longer, foolishly and inefficiently, against the instincts of our nature, and the appointment of our Creator. Authority ought to be regulated, not extinguished. Its influence ought to be fully recognized, but it should never be permitted to exert that influence in opposition to our senses, to the *evident* deductions of reason, and the will of God *clearly revealed*. In *opposition* to good moral evidence the voice of authority should never be raised ; but in support of even the best evidence of that nature, it may be called in as a useful ally. It often makes truth more palatable, disposes us to listen to its voice, and prepares our minds for its reception. It may, it is true, occasionally take the field in aid of error, as well as of truth, because, with Mr. Hardcastle, it “likes every thing that is old ;” it may appeal to the wisdom of ancestors, with the confidence of a modern disclaimer ; it may advocate the cause of legitimacy in aid of the argument, that Government, like fruit, is mellowed and improved by time—all this it has done, and will still do, because, like other *powers*, it is fond of extending its influence ; but this only proves the propriety of restraining and regulating that influence, but not of extinguishing it. Besides, let us not forget that a thing may be old, and still good ; that our ancestors were not always in the wrong ; and that legitimacy itself is sometimes paternal. Even

when it supports erroneous systems and establishments, the influence of authority will generally be found beneficial, rather than injurious. It restrains individuals from premature and violent attempts at reformation, which may terminate in their own ruin, in local disturbance, and useless bloodshed. It preserves the peace of society, while truth and reason are, slowly, and gradually, preparing the public mind for the peaceable, or less violent abolition of erroneous and oppressive systems. When this change of sentiment is effected, authority takes its station by the side of the reformers, and becomes the champion of that truth which it, before, had opposed.

If all human knowledge admitted of pure demonstration, moral evidence would become useless ; but authority would still retain its influence, and use, till *all* men became capable of collecting indisputable truths, and drawing inevitable conclusions. Controversy, indeed, whose food is probability, but whose deadly foe is demonstration, would, perhaps, be at an end. The Doctors Magee, Curtis, Doyle, and Singer, *mirabile dictu*, may think alike, club their wits, and co-operate for the instruction of our labourers, operatives, and sportsmen. But authority would still be the medium through which these high and mighty demonstrators must convey their infallible truths to the uneducated orders, who would have neither

time nor capacity for elaborate demonstration. For instance, the mode in which Christ is present in the Sacrament, God has not distinctly revealed in his Word. The reception of the simple truth is all that is required of the Christian, who is not to labour to be wise above what is written. However, under the reign of demonstration, the irrefragable Doctors, above mentioned, would soon agree, among themselves, about the mode, as a necessary adjunct to the simple truth, pronouncing it to be either a spiritual presence, a presence by consubstantiation, by transubstantiation, or some other presence. The belief of this mode would be recommended to the people at large, and by them gradually adopted, not on the authority of Scripture, from whence it is only deducible by a difficult process of reasoning, but on the authority of the great names above mentioned, with their combined host of invincible theologians. Indeed it may be said with truth, that under the reign of demonstration itself the authority of the great and learned would still be the middle term through whose intervention the mass of mankind would draw their conclusions on most, and particularly religious subjects, and would continue to do so, though every table and shelf were groaning with Bibles. But in the present state of our faculties, when only moral evidence is vouchsafed, on the most momentous subjects, authority is fully as necessary, and still more useful;

because, as already shown, to the uneducated it supplies the place of that evidence, it frequently exerts its influence in support of truth, and, though it often lends its countenance to error, it does so, only, till men are prepared for its subversion by the progress of truth ; and, in the mean time, it tends to preserve the peace of society, with the lives, fame, and fortunes of individuals, by dis-countenancing premature improvement. In short, authority is a legitimate ground of assent, in the *absence of a better*, but never in opposition to it. In some cases, indeed, authority is opposed to authority ; but authority and truth will, always, in the end, prevail over authority and error.

Cicero, as able a man as any of our Biblical orators, did not scruple to say, “ *Malum cum Platone errare, quam cum aliis recte sentire.*” I do not adopt the sentiment in its unqualified sense, yet, it evidently implies, that whoever should rely on the authority of Plato would seldom be misled. In his opinion, then, authority might be a good ground of assent. But why not rely on the authority of a Christian Church, more than on that of any individual Philosopher, Pagan, or Christian ? if that great orator, philosopher, and statesman, were now alive, resident among us, and acquainted with Christianity, its code, its history, and its evidences, with what a mixture of surprise, indignation, and pity, would he behold modern Doctors

of Divinity—doffing their scarlet, and hastening to exhort the poor ignorant son of labour to expound for himself the code of man's salvation—to rest with confidence on his own mental incapacity—on the wild dreams of a feeble and bewildered understanding, merely because it is his own—and not on the labours of men, whose lives had been devoted to the investigation of divine truth—who have produced Christ's commission to instruct his flock, and are the chartered guardians of their faith and practice!

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### CHAPTER III.

*Proceedings of the Bible Societies and other proselyting Associations in Ireland.—Effects on the Catholic Population.—Inconsistency of the Leaders of these Societies.—Their Morality not always rigid.*

To the foregoing observations, so intimately connected with the pretended rights of unassisted private judgment, and the proceedings of the proselyting Societies in Ireland, I beg to call the attention of the honest and unsophisticated reader. Indeed I suspect that the leaders of those spiritual renovators, who sometimes transform *Lords* into *Fools*, and *Fools* into *Sages*, are not so hostile to authority, nor so friendly to the exercise of private

judgment, as they pretend. When they issue their marching orders to a regiment of Bibles, to reinforce the garrison of a particular town, the march is preceded and followed by a numerous rabble of irregulars, composed of handbills—newspaper squibs—speeches revised and reported—pious tracts—evangelical essays—serious reviews, and more serious magazines, in all which popery and its priesthood are described as the most abominable of all possible abominations, and clothed with the choicest attributes of hell and Satan, while the members of the holy alliance of proselyting fanatics, are held out as ministering angels, descending from heaven, on missions of mercy. These are dropped on the roads, scattered in the fields, given to *good* children, read in stage coaches, forgotten at public houses, and other places of popular resort. Almost every spot, however sequestered, bears on its bosom some printed testimony of the virtues of the *saints*, and of the “flagitious impostures of the *children of Anti-christ*.” What is this but an attempt to persuade the poor papists, that the proselyting folk are endowed with all those eminent and estimable qualities to which authority is naturally annexed ; that, in the chair of authority, accordingly, they ought to be placed, and the Roman Catholic priests thrust out of it, as impudent pretenders, and detected impostors. Even when they do no more than lament, in piteous strains, the “gross

superstition and deplorable ignorance" of the Catholics of Ireland, does not the very intensity of the lamentation betray a secret wish, that they who are foremost in discovering such a "sad and general falling off," should be deemed the most enlightened,—who lament it so deeply, the most benevolent,—who labour so incessantly to remedy it, the most charitable of mankind? Do they not evidently aim at establishing their own authority on the ruins of that of the Catholic Priests, for the purpose, let us charitably suppose, of chasing away vice, superstition, and idolatry to the banks of the Tiber? But do not their eager aspirations after authority for themselves, while they labour to subvert that of others, show their full conviction, in opposition to their own repeated declarations, that it is a useful and necessary mean of conveying and recommending truth, though, like every other moral engine, liable to abuse?

If, by the influence of authority, they could once gain admission to the good opinion of the poor of Ireland, they would, by the very act, become masters of their private judgment. A rich, influential, and learned body, who have the command of the Press to an unlimited extent, whose agents, emissaries, and admirers, are every where on duty, —if such a body could once command the esteem, and staring veneration of the simple peasant, their

favourite doctrine, or rather the dialect, or cant, which is its constituted vehicle, would glide into his head, more smoothly, though less perceptibly, than their Bible into his hand. Such is the magic effect of nice tracts, smooth address, and dexterous innuendoes, judiciously administered, especially when the preparation is enriched with significant shrugs, and eyes gleaming with a mingled expression of wiliness and saintship. The new religious impressions, should such be produced on his mind, by these powerful stimuli, the poor peasant would impute to the operation of the Bible on his private judgment; little suspecting, that his new opinions, or rather the terms that express them, had been adopted on the mere authority of Doctor Singer, in opposition to that of Doctor Doyle. The only act of his judgment, on the occasion, would be a preference of the authority of the former, to that of the latter, which alone would induce him to reject the Bishop's interpretation of certain texts of Scripture, and embrace that of the missionary. Reasoning would be out of the question. Yet the extraordinary excitation of his mind, its turbid conceptions, and violent emotions, partly produced, perhaps, by a quarrel with his priest commanding him to make restitution, and partly by his resolution of plunging into a new and untried system of religious belief—this mental fermentation, combined with the half-formed notions imbibed from the missionaries, would pass with the poor crea-

ture for sound reasoning—the result of the application of his own private judgment to the interpretation of Scriptural texts ! He had been often exhorted to think for himself, and judge for himself, and would never suspect that they, who with such real solemnity, and apparent sincerity, had recognized the competence of his intellectual powers, and enforced the vigorous exercise of them, would slyly, secretly, and insidiously, infuse into his mind the results of their own interpretation, and pass them upon him for his own discoveries.

The same methods, practised upon an ignorant Protestant, would bid, at least, equally fair in producing a similar result. Let us suppose a Roman Catholic Bible Society established in France, with the consent of the Pope, and patronised by a crowd of nobles and prelates, for the purpose of circulating the principle of private judgment, and Douay versions of the Bible without note or comment, among the poor Protestants of Ireland. The supposition, it is true, is a violent one ; but, let us admit it, for a moment, and speculate on the probable result. Here, also, it would be authority against authority—Doctor Doyle and the Pope, at the head of all the zealots and fanatics of their persuasion, circulating their Bibles among the ignorant Protestants, calling upon them to think for themselves, and throw off the degrading yoke of the Thirty-nine Articles.

These Bibles would be issued in their “naked purity”—“without note or comment,” “unmixed with the opinions of modern theologues.” There would, I say, be no note or comment *annexed to the text*: this would be too honest a proceeding, too glaringly at variance with their pretended principle—the right of unassisted private judgment. The turbulent and selfish principles of man’s nature, his pride, his presumption, his self-love, his inordinate self-conceit, must be addressed and flattered. This would be done in myriads of little desultory publications, exalting the sufficiency of man’s intellectual powers in their natural state, unsophisticated by the pursuits of human knowledge, or profane speculations. In aid of these, would also issue from every popish press, a swarm of little unfledged productions, numerous as flocks of starlings, chirping out smartish argument on every point of Protestant doctrine, well adapted to the size of the understandings upon which they were intended to operate. My dear friends, one writer would say, the fat parsons, and the bloated bishops, as your Bibles will tell you, are blind leaders; but do you rise up, in the dignity of your nature, and show them that you are not blind enough to be led. With your Bibles in your hands, and your own judgment in your heads, will you believe the wicked absurdities they impose upon you. When Christ himself tells you, “this is my body,” and

the blind guides tell you it is not his body, but something else, which will you believe? To support their lie, they modestly call upon you to believe that the word *is* signifies *represents*. But if so, would not Christ use the latter word in preference to the former? Then his meaning could not be mistaken; and surely your own unsophisticated judgment will tell you that he would not lay a trap for the souls whom he came to save. In another place, does he not say, "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, &c.," is this, too, to be explained into something spiritual, by Protestant logic, which wrests words from their meaning, and makes Christ a quibbling sophist. But, my dear friends, care not for what either Protestant or Catholic tells you—read the Bible—attend to the plain meaning of the words, and judge for yourselves; always suspect those who advance, against the plain sense of Scripture, under the banner of philosophy and logic. They will tell you, that the same body cannot, at the same time, be in different places. This is true of the natural bodies with which you are acquainted; but the body of Christ, though human, is united to the Deity; can you tell what capabilities that conferred upon it, what disabilities it removed? What appears to us a contradiction may not be so in reality. Such it may seem to the purblind reason of man; but give that reason infinite expansion, and the contradiction may

vanish. Where reason sees nothing but incongruity, the Deity may discover the most exact harmony. But erring man, as presumptuous as he is blind, attempts to reduce the hidden things of God to the level of his own feeble comprehension; he makes his foolish objections, and his futile distinctions, on subjects with whose relations and natures he is utterly unacquainted; he talks of things above reason, and contrary to reason, though the latter may be only contrary to *his* reason, and not to the reason of that infinite intelligence who sees all their bearings, their relations, their connexions, and mutual dependencies. Then, determined to make revelation bend to his system, he allegorizes and mystifies it at will; he says that "body and blood" mean only spiritual presence; and fortifies his ratiocination with profane, and unsavoury jests, about chewing, swallowing, and digesting God; while those jesting impieties are really directed at the obvious meaning, and express words of your Bible. Finally, having, by a logical process, stripped the plain words of Scripture of their plain meaning, and fastened on them a far-fetched sense of his own, he triumphantly exclaims that the popish doctrine of Transubstantiation is anti-scriptural, impious, and idolatrous. What is too scriptural for his taste, he always pronounces to be anti-scriptural, adding as many other abusive epithets as his memory can furnish.

This is a sufficient specimen of the mode and spirit in which a grand Bible Association of Roman Catholics, through their numerous agents, emissaries, and anonymous scribblers, might address a Protestant peasantry, on every controverted point of doctrine. And if such addresses, however deficient in sound argument, should be seconded by an imposing appearance of worldly grandeur, elevated rank, literary fame, and high pretensions to religious purity, who will say that the faith of our poor operatives and labourers might not be shaken before the lapse of a quarter of a century? Repeated appeals, oral, and printed, exhorting them to rely on their own understandings, and throw off the yoke of a bloated and avaricious clergy, wallowing in wealth and worldliness, would excite attention. The Word of God, in its uncontaminated purity, which can make them wise unto salvation, and whose saving truths, preached originally to the poor, are peculiarly suited to their capacity, "the utmost perspicuity being essential to a divine revelation,"—this Word of God tendered in the spirit or profession of disinterested charity, by the good and great, the learned and pious, the princes and nobles of the Catholic world—the Bible without note or comment; but with the important and flattering appendage of the all sufficiency of private judgment, circulated by those to whom it was originally given, and who clung to it through the

fires of persecution, and the darkness of barbarism—the Bible first given to Catholics, handed down, by Catholics, among poor benighted Protestants (for such they would be styled) would, it is more than probable, make a deep impression in favour of Catholic principles.

But all this would be effected by tickling men's pride, by extolling their judgment, by little plausibilities of speech undeserving of the name of argument, by judicious sprinklings of invective, but chiefly by authority, the most cogent of all arguments in the mind of the peasant, because the only one he can fully comprehend.

The Roman Catholic Church claims an authority conferred by Christ himself, in the express words of Scripture, and transmitted through an uninterrupted succession of ministers. She holds herself forth as the infallible and divinely authorized interpreter of Scripture. How flattering to the pride of a Protestant operative, that such a Church should *seem to delegate*, to him, her full powers of interpretation, when, in giving him the Bible, she would say, “take, read, and judge for yourself; God has given you understanding; employ it in his service by unfolding the mysteries of his Word.” What unfurnished head of labourer or mechanic could resist an invitation so seemingly fair, so seductive, yet so really trea-

cherous? All the peculiar doctrines of popery would gradually find their way to his mind, through a thousand channels, and, in reading the Bible, he would find the supremacy of Saint Peter, the real corporal presence, the invocation of Mary full of grace, inscribed on every page, they would fasten on his imagination, and become identified with his convictions.

In Ireland our Church would enter into a proselyting contest with the Church of Rome, under manifest disadvantage. The spiritual authority of a Christian Church, which she claims in her Articles, has been but faintly and indistinctly urged, for more than a century; some of her own children from the beginning have opposed it in deed, if not in word; the Protestant dissenters laugh at it; *et tu Brute!* even the Church members of the Bible Society, poniard in hand, have aimed a deadly blow at this spiritual authority, by rebelliously proclaiming that "the right of reading the Bible implies in every reader, or hearer, however ignorant, the right, and duty, of interpreting it,"—a principle so pregnant with absurdity, so repugnant to analogy, so much at variance with every maxim tending to preserve an unity of belief and practice among Christians, so hostile in its tendency to domestic harmony, and the peace and order of society, that future generations will exclaim, that in the nineteenth century, a new Babel

had arisen built of Bibles, instead of brick, and cemented with pious fraud, instead of bitumen. Feeble and vacillating, stripped of spiritual authority, and destitute of all influence except that invidious kind which she derives from her temporalities, and the support of the Civil Magistrate, any attempt on the part of the Church to proselyte the Roman Catholics of Ireland, must be desperate. She is restrained by her Articles from adopting the proselyting machinery of the Bible Society, namely the *omnipotence of private judgment* operating on a Bible without note or comment. The Bible Society, however, with its other missionary associates, have entered the field of controversy, under more favourable auspices, but, with no other effect than that of disturbing public tranquillity, and drawing into public notice the talents of many of the Catholic Priests, the skilful exertions of their spiritual authority, and the mutual attachment of the clergy and laity cemented by an identity of religious conviction and temporal interest, but, still more, by that sacred feeling, kindled in Irish hearts, by a community of suffering in the cause of God, endured for ages with the constancy of martyrs. To extinguish these talents, these attachments, these convictions, these exalted feelings, in the present state of Ireland is utterly impossible. The Bible Societies may as well attempt to subdue the storm by breathing against it. Indeed a little political sa-

gacity, and knowledge of the world, would be an useful acquirement for a *Proselyting* Association, who do not pretend to work *miracles*.

But deplorably deficient, in these qualities, are the ghostly speculators, licensed, indeed, to trade in authorized versions of the Bible, but circulating the crudities of unqualified private judgment without leave or license. They can, it is true, fascinate susceptible females with pathetic tales, spiritual declamation, and misapplied or irrelevant quotations from the Bible. Assisted by his lady, and practising on his simplicity, they can sometimes persuade a country Nimrod that every papist on his estate is fairer game than the fox in his covers;—that it would be a nobler exploit to wrest his beads from the former, than his brush from the latter; that the substitution of papist-hunting for fox-hunting, would effect a great saving in hay, oats, and the wear and tear of hunters; that it would be less dangerous to his body, and if he performed his part with sufficient vigour, infinitely more refreshing to his soul. In many of the lesser arts of detraction and seduction, also, they are sufficiently expert. They can address the hopes, fears, and *touch* of an indigent caitiff. They can,—when they see a poor papist worshipping his God, with heart and *hand*, *sub Jove pluvio*, at the door of an overflowing chapel,—him, they can, without scruple, brand with the

opprobrious name of a wretched craw-thumper, forgetful of the penitent publican, who *smote on his breast*, and said “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Yet, all their arts have failed to make any sensible impression on the great mass of popery; though, in some instances, they have succeeded in catching a hungry knave with a gilded bait. But of national character, the ingredients that compose it, and the various circumstances by which it is moulded, they know nothing: or they must have known, that a Bible translated by enemies, authorized by persecutors, and proffered by the indefatigable revilers of their creed, would be in little request among Irish Catholics. An Irish peasant would sooner trust to his oak stick, in an encounter with Satan, than to the celestial panoply of the Bible Society. This institution exhibiting, among its members, so many enemies to the rights, and consequent welfare of Catholics, is regarded, with peculiar distrust, through all their various classes. If the authorized version and private judgment were good things, they conceive that Lord Liverpool, Lord Bexley, Lord Lorton, Lord Roden, &c. &c. would impose restrictions on their circulation, instead of promoting it by premiums and bounties. When the Society offer the peasant one of their Bibles, and tell him it is the bread of life, the latter sometimes thanks their Honors for their present and information, but takes care to exchange *their* bread of life for Irish

*aqua vitæ*, in the next dram-shop. Such is the case when the gift is received, but the usual way is to reject the gift, and execrate the giver.

It must, however, be acknowledged that the capital and industry of this great company of commercial theologists, is by no means unproductive. It has yielded an ample return of furious passions, and vindictive feelings, from the whole Catholic body. In this manner, it has produced *more sin*, and *wickedness*, in a single year, amidst a population of many millions, than will be counterbalanced by all the good it can effect in a century, from Spitzbergen to Cape Horn, and from California to China. For the extent of its demoralizing effects, in Ireland, I appeal to every impartial observer acquainted with the country, and the proceedings of the Holy Alliance, of Bible Societies, Missionary Associations, and Education Companies, for the last few years. They have, indeed, with their eyes open, incurred an awful responsibility. In labouring to transform Papists into Protestants, they have converted men into demons. Nor is this transformation confined to Roman Catholics. Every grain of acerbity, which had previously dropped into the heart of an intolerant Protestant, shoots under their culture, into rank luxuriance. Religious rancour, gloomy suspicion, and bitter malignity, are every where the fruits of their mission.

From my soul I pity the hard lot of my beloved countrymen, and Christian brethren, the Roman Catholics of Ireland. Their righteous claims, as men and citizens, are ungraciously rejected, though nearly all the great proprietors of the soil, all of every sect who are really generous, *disinterested*, and truly enlightened, join the prayer of their petition. Their religion, so ancient, so venerable, and, in their estimation, so apostolic, so eminently Christian, is damned by every orange reprobate, and denounced, as unholy, by every sturdy saint, and deep-toned missionary. I pity also the delusion, the selfishness, the insincerity, and the flinty hearts of their tormentors. The laborious cultivators of the soil are loaded with every opprobrious epithet by many of those who consume its fruits. A great Christian community are reprobated because they hold, that, in addition to the bloody scene on Mount Calvary, Christ, in his boundless compassion, condescends to be sacrificed every day, by the hands of his ministers, for a guilty and perishing race. The believers of this doctrine are stigmatized as idolaters, because, by the evidence of faith, they discover, in the visible elements, the real and corporal presence of an unseen Saviour, and worship accordingly. Thus, because they, evcry day, worship Christ in the consecrated elements, they are called idolaters,—because they are, perhaps, ultra-christian, they are stigmatized as anti-christian.

Their leading traducers are the advocates of unlimited private judgment; yet this obnoxious doctrine of Transubstantiation is founded on Scripture—on various texts, in various parts of Scripture, as interpreted by a great majority of the Christian world—a doctrine to which Henry the Eighth in his fury tenaciously adhered, which Luther, and many other of the leading Reformers, could scarcely prevail on themselves to renounce. But what a wonderful being is the clerical hawker of unrestricted private judgment, and authorized versions, without note or comment! He advises the poor inmate of a manufactory, who derives his scanty morsel from the monotonous labour of seventeen hours a day, to interpret the Bible for himself, and derive his religious opinions from it; the opinions thus derived, the Bible Society apostle, it must be presumed, would respect, be they ever so erroneous, as being honestly and conscientiously adopted. But he shows no mercy to the believers in Transubstantiation, though the doctrine rests on Scriptural texts; though it rest not on a far-fetched meaning, but on a literal interpretation of these texts; and though the interpreter be not an ignorant peasant, but all the great, and good, and learned of Catholic Christendom. Yet, in opposition to his favourite principle, and to all the kind and generous affections of human nature, he denounces, as idolatrous, a doctrine

resting on such a basis, and condemns, as devilish, the *public* and *private* judgment that entertain it.

But inconsistency seems to be an element as congenial to the nature of a modern Missionary, as salt-water to the gudgeon of the deep. The whole life of a clerical Bible Society Church-man is a continued series of inconsistencies. He first sets out with subscribing the Thirty-nine Articles ; that is, he adopts the interpretation of the Church on all the points of Christian belief ; then he joins the Bible Society, and adopts the principle of private judgment in its utmost latitude, which substitutes its own interpretation for that of the Church : then he ascends the pulpit, and, having before his eyes the fear of losing his tithes, or of obstructing his promotion, he extols the admirable provision made by his "pure apostolic Church," for the instruction of the faithful, in all the doctrines of Christianity. The next day he mounts the rostra of the Bible Society, cautions his dear friends to beware of false teachers, and bring every doctrine to the test of Scripture interpreted by the unsophisticated reason of each individual ; then he adjourns to dinner with his spiritual associates, and talks, with temperate rapture, to his assembled brethren, of the consistency of his conduct.

The morality of these gentlemen is not always

rigid ; it frequently bends in gentle adaptation to circumstances. Let a single instance suffice. One of their practical doctrines is, that a man is not answerable, in one capacity, for acts done in another. Accordingly in his ministerial capacity, he preaches the doctrine of the Church ; but in his other capacity of being a good member of the Bible Society, he vehemently inculcates the disorganizing principle that aims at its subversion. Thus the minister of the Gospel is perfectly consistent with himself ; the Bible Society orator is equally consistent ; but the orator and the minister are still the same man, therefore this man is perfectly consistent with himself. This reminds me of that ancient sage who thought he had two souls, one virtuous, the other wicked. Or rather it reminds me of Doctor Singer, who at a great meeting had been disclaiming all proselytizing views for the Bible Society, (a disclaimer, by the way, which nobody believes;) but a Catholic speaker having stated, in reply, that two Secretaries of that venerable body had, in their way to a Bible Meeting held in Carlow, scattered about many Anti-Catholic Tracts ; finding that the fact was notorious, the Doctor pleaded, in their defence, that they scattered the Tracts not in their character of Bible Society-men, but in quite a distinct capacity ; for that, like other individuals of that body, they were also members of certain proselytizing Associations. This doctrine of the

double capacity has the merit of a very extensive application in the affairs of life. It is the doctrine of him who, when detected in sheep-stealing, justified himself by alleging that he detested the theft, in his capacity of an honest man; but loved it, in his heart, in his capacity of a father anxious to provide food for his famishing children. It may be bad taste, or it may be stupidity, but I dislike this modern "double doctrine" less when produced as a plea by the poor sheep-stealer, than when advanced by the learned Doctor, in justification of the Reverend Secretaries. The Kildare-street Association, and all the Missionary and Education Clubs zealously co-operate with the Bible Society, in this work of mischief and demoralization. Indeed, whatever may be pretended, the latter are, in strict truth, mere modifications of the former. The great principle of all is the same—the right and duty of unlimited private judgment. In all, the members are generally the same individuals,—the same are their watch-words,—the same their spiritual and imitating cant, viz.,—"famine of the Word of God"—"poor benighted papists"—"priest-ridden creatures, who submit to be whipped and spurred by their merciless riders," &c.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Education Societies.—Naturally and justly opposed by the Priests.—A Fact in illustration.—Consistent Conduct of the Society of Friends.—Irish Protestants all Quakers in one respect.*

THE Education Clubs evidently grew out of the Bible Society, and undertook to supply its deficiencies. The latter offered only Bibles and private judgment; these were both refused. Then, to smooth the way for both, the Kildare-street Club stepped forth, with the alluring bribe of gratuitous education for the poor. Panting for that celebrity, which the honourable mention of his name, by a Kildare-street orator, confers, a country squire, or his lady, erects a school-house, which is soon supplied with a rich assortment of Bibles from the next depository. Then addressing the peasant, on his estate,—“Pat, (he says,) education is a fine thing, there is no doing without it in these times, so you must send your children to my school.” “But, your Honour, the priest says, that if they go there, they must be reading and *interpreting* the Bible out of their own heads, and, troth, bad *interpreters* they are.” “That is the very reason you ought to send them; they will learn to read, that is what you want; and you need not be afraid of the Bible; they will

understand little or nothing of it at their age, the eldest being little more than sixteen." [Here the squire inadvertently speaks truth, while meaning to deceive.] "Why the priest, *your Honour*, says it might be very bad for them to read the Bible without help." "What, you villain, does the priest say there is any thing bad in the Bible?" "Troth, he says no such thing; he says there is nothing in the Bible but what is good; but, along with that, he says, that the devil and private judgment have turned the good of it into bad a hundred thousand times, and will do so again; and God forbid my *childer* should have any hand in that." Here, the squire, unprepared to meet Pat's argument, without fresh instructions from Kildare-street, practises a new evolution, "and, Pat, (says he,) do you think your cabin and potato-garden worth the rent you pay for them?" "Why, I thank God and your Honour, I am not worse off than my neighbours." "Well then, I was just thinking of letting you have them next year again at the same rent." "Oh! God bless your Honour, and her ladyship's Honour, where can we find the like of——" "But mind, Pat, you must send the boys to the school, and the girls too; I tell you they will be able to make nothing of the Bible good or bad; so make yourself easy about that." Of the drift of this proposal, Pat is well aware; in general he rejects it, and is ejected. Sometimes, however, he gives a reluctant consent, for which

he indemnifies himself by co-operating, with the priest, in infusing into the breasts of the young students, at their return from school, a pious horror of every thing Protestant, except—the Constitution.

The term *Protestant Constitution* is styled, by the priest, a misnomer of Lord Eldon, or a blunder of Sir Harcourt Lees, adopted by Lord Liverpool. For this Constitution he expresses the deepest veneration, precisely because it is *not* Protestant. He assures the boys that it is Catholic, from head to foot: that it sprung from Catholic parents, was nurtured by Catholic guardians, that for ages of glory it produced Catholic monarchs, and protected a Catholic people; that it was betrayed at last by lust, avarice, and violence, into the hands of heretics, who, year after year, have been plunging their daggers into its vitals, and disfiguring its fair form. That several Protestants, of high talents and station, lamenting this hard treatment, have endeavoured, from time to time, to bind up its wounds, and infuse a portion of pure blood into its veins, but that their patriotic views have been always resisted by the vermin engendered in the corruption of its sores. Yet, exclaims the priest, with rising fervour, apostrophizing the Constitution, under another image, with the license of Irish fancy, “ I love thee “ venerable but neglected edifice, though the

“ winds of heaven whistle through thy roof, and  
“ the moping bird of night nestle on thy battle-  
“ ments. Yes, thou great memorial of mitred  
“ prelates, and crested chiefs, of all that once  
“ was brave and pious, I love thee much ; and  
“ long to be admitted, with my poor flock, within  
“ thy mouldering precincts.” Then lowering his  
tone, he presumes to assert in plain prose, that  
Protestants have, repeatedly, and deeply, injured  
our invaluable Constitution, while to them it  
owes little or no improvement, except the Habeas  
Corpus Act, and, that even this was nothing more  
than a revival of rights enjoyed in ancient times  
by Catholic England. Whether this rhapsody be  
true, in the whole, or only in part, every reader  
must decide for himself. I attempt only to record  
the substance and spirit of what I know to be  
passing about me. But all this is merely an epi-  
sode, in a theological dissertation, in which Pro-  
testant errors, Protestant injustice, and Protestant  
cruelties are detailed, with a zeal that would do  
credit to the Rev. Robert Daly, “speaking the  
truth in charity,” to prove Mr. O’Connell an ido-  
later. The detail might be offensive to Protestant  
ears. Suffice to say, that the loves of Henry the  
Eighth, the Christian compliances of Cranmer, the  
virgin purity of Elizabeth, the dialogues of Luther  
and Satan, and the evidence of Doctor Magee  
before the Parliamentary Committees, sparkle,  
like gems, in every part of the narrative.

These powerful antiseptics are repeatedly administered, but, to avoid nausea, in small quantities, till the catechumens, in the opinion of the priest, are sufficiently fortified against the foul breath and spiritual leprosy of the Kildare-street Association. Every cabin, in the country, is the seat of this vast reaction; but these, especially, whose young inmates resort to the newly erected Bible seminaries of education. Such are the effects of exclusion obstinately maintained, and, still more, of proselyting speculations:—a whole nation, goaded almost to madness, and contending, *pro aris et focis*, against a presumptuous, self-commissioned, confederacy of blind fanatics, whose faculties, absorbed in their visionary projects, are incapable of perceiving the mischief they are producing. Will the Government, like the Church, still passively look on, while these men are quoting Scripture, and scattering fire-brands? In many counties of Ireland, the breath of public indignation has, at the late elections, blasted the Orange interest, and left its astonished champions nothing but the spiritual consolation of their brethren of the Bible Society and Kildare-street Associations—a consolation which these venerable bodies ought to deal out largely, as they were mainly instrumental in exciting the reaction which discomfited the friends of exclusion.

Does this yield no matter of serious reflection

to the British politician? And is it nothing that tithes are cried down more loudly than ever, by Irish Protestants, as an intolerable grievance?—The Society of Friends, indeed, from honest scruples of conscience, always resist the payment of tithes, till compelled by stern necessity in the shape of a Vicar General, or two justices; and, on their principles, they are perfectly right and consistent. Why should a man who believes that Christ appointed no order of public teachers, but who relies solely on his own private judgment and divine illumination, pay the tenth, or *any* part of the produce of his farm, to a preacher of the Thirty-nine Articles which would fetter his judgment and extinguish his illumination? He is no friend to the made dishes and spiritual refinements of Church cookery. He sits down to the pure uncommented Bible spread before him, and, with the spectacles of his private judgment, closely examines its good things by the steady light of that lamp that burns within him. He naturally and justly concludes, that a man who pretends to teach others, who have Bibles, private judgment, and assurances of divine aid, as well as himself, must be not only a lover of filthy lucre, but guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Now this is all extremely fair, honest, and consistent. Indeed I highly esteem the Society of Friends, not only for their general integrity and

unassuming simplicity, but for the undeviating consistency of their conduct. But every Protestant farmer in Ireland is now a quaker in the article of tithes, with this difference, that he does not always put off the payment till his beast or furniture is seized on. Not that every such farmer has been already converted to the principle of private judgment, but that, as he well knows, many of his clergy are dealers in that commodity ; and therefore he wonders why men, who can claim no right to direct his judgment, are not ashamed to claim a right to the produce of his land. He frequently remarks to his neighbours that an immense revenue, extracted from the labour of a people already groaning under the weight of parliamentary taxation, is too great a remuneration for a clergy, who, by referring the people to the exercise of their own judgment, virtually disclaim all authority to instruct them in the principles of the Christian religion.—In his opinion, if a man ought to derive his religion from the Bible, as interpreted by himself, he has also a right to administer the sacrament to himself, to make a liturgy for himself, and write sermons for his own use. The Church reading-desk and pulpit would, of course, become useless ; or at best, a good sermon from a smooth-tongued clerical orator, like an elegant dessert after a substantial dinner, would be but a mere luxury which may be well dispensed with ; while a bad sermon

would be too severe an infliction on an enlightened congregation.

Such is the subject of many a conversation among Protestants of the green isle, cordially assented to by the Roman Catholics,—a circumstance meriting the serious consideration of those who think that a Church Establishment is a necessary appendage to the State, or who are convinced with me that authorized teachers are essential to a Christian community, or, lastly, who are persuaded that a perseverance in political restrictions, no longer wise, and in fanatical speculations always foolish, will, on the first fair opportunity, *certainly* lead to dreadful convulsion, *probably* to the dismemberment, and *possibly* to the subversion of an empire.

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## CHAPTER V.

*Cry against Popery.—Its Meaning and Policy.—Awfully opposed to the Morality of the Gospel.—Tolerance.—Popery as it is, and as it is not.—Many of its Observances entitled to much Indulgence.—The Pope—Unfounded Alarms.*

IN Ireland nothing is left unsaid, or undone, to throw ridicule and discredit on the doctrine and ritual of Rome. Argument, sometimes

sound, often fallacious, is unsparingly used.—Truth, when it can be found, and suits the purpose, is eagerly called in. But the engine principally employed, is falsehood in its various forms—falsification of history, distortion of facts, suppression of concomitant circumstances, imputation of evil motives in opposition to probability, or experience. Add to these the cruel and horrible insinuation so broadly, and *frequently* thrown out, that oaths cannot bind the conscience, nor honour influence the conduct of Catholics of any rank, when the supposed interest of their religion is concerned. If this bad spirit were confined to the members of our corporations, whose ignorance, selfishness, and habits of animal gratification might be pleaded in mitigation,—were it confined to the instruments of their extortion,—to those numerous expectants, who press forward to unmerited employment through corporation connexion and intrigue,—were it confined to those who profit by Grand Jury jobs, Vestry abuses, the spirit of exclusion, and the impoverishment of their neighbours;—or, lastly, were it confined to mere trading politicians, hot in the pursuit of wealth, or place, and anxious only to please those who can bestow both;—were it confined to all, or any of this description, I would not interfere, I would leave it to the castigation of the ordinary press, to the disapprobation and pity of every man of candour and sound feeling.

They act a natural part ;—they are labouring in their vocation ;—they find it profitable, and that is all they aim at. When they raise the cry of “Protestant Constitution,” does any one imagine that the ideas annexed to these terms, flit, even transiently, through their minds? No ; by these words they mean nothing more or less than this—let Papists ever be a degraded cast, and the drudges of the land ; but let them drudge for our benefit, and not for their own. Let us have no popish competitors in the job-market. Allow them not to bid against us for the “fat things,” which we have so long enjoyed, and know so well how to use. A little pillage and peculation, decently conducted, is the birth-right of every staunch Protestant, and sound loyalist. Why resign to popish aspirants such valuable rights, won in many a well-fought field, by the “red right hands” of our valiant forefathers.

To blame such men, or reason with them, would be equally ridiculous. They have their darling idol,—that, and that alone, they worship, and from it they cannot be detached.

But the reformed Clergy—they ought to be fit objects of expostulation. They may with propriety be asked, why do you join in the cruel, selfish, intolerant cry ; why echo the furious yell not of bigotry, but of Mammon? Do you think that

Catholic emancipation would be dangerous to the State? This is a consideration, which on full conviction, may justify the hostility of the mere statesman; but not that of the minister of the Gospel, who ought to be governed, not by sordid views of political expediency, but by the higher and nobler principle worthy of the hero, the man of honour, and the Christian—be just and fear not. Of the controverted doctrines of the Gospel, the ablest men entertain different views: but no such difference of opinion exists among them, on its moral precepts, though, from their brevity, they are susceptible sometimes of a more extended, sometimes of a more limited application. Now, of the thousands of moral precepts, contained in the Scriptures, how few are there which do not imperatively call upon you, directly or indirectly, with all the force of which general propositions are susceptible, in their application to particular objects, to renounce the exclusive system, and extend to your fellow-men of every religious persuasion, the full benefits of the social compact. Take up your Concordance; look into it for the words humility, meekness, mercy, love, justice, patience, charity, neighbour, brother, creature, &c., and then refer to your Bible for the passages at large; read them with the same conviction, that they are the Word of God, with which you peruse the texts relating to the Trinity, to reprobation, election, to the presence of Christ in the sacrament, and the like;

if then, upon mature reflection, you still retain the spirit of persecution, I shall only say you reject half your Bible—you retain its mysteries, because they are above your comprehension—you despise its morality, because it teaches you only the obvious and vulgar lesson of doing good.

To quote all the passages, earnestly and feelingly recommending the honest disposition, the Christian temper of mind, the disinterested and benevolent feelings which would “render to all their due,” would be endless, and in citing some, to the exclusion of the rest, the selection would be difficult. Therefore I refer you again to your Bible; read it in the spirit of him who gave his life for the Brethren, and your heart of stone will relent. In explaining away some texts, the sophist and the casuist will employ their arts of deception, but the spirit of the whole, to him who is really convinced of the authenticity of the book, must be irresistible. The Roman Catholic is your fellow-subject—give him the full benefit of the relation; he is your fellow-creature—believe him; he is your neighbour—cherish him; he is your brother—love him; he is a candidate for a happy immortality as well as yourself—oh! do not blight his prospects, or your own, by nourishing in your bosom, or in his, the hellish passions of hatred and discord. Your system even violates the great duty of common honesty.

It draws a line of separation between Protestants and Roman Catholics, which greatly obstructs their mutual intercourse. Hence, the practice of the Catholic physician, surgeon, lawyer, apothecary, &c., is almost confined to those of his own persuasion, who are less able to reward his professional exertions. The liberal fees, which he might otherwise receive from his Protestant neighbours, are intercepted by their prejudices. Thus he is robbed by anticipation. But you foment the prejudice which withholds the employment, and the remuneration: therefore you are an accomplice in the robbery. This may not be dishonest, in the “private judgment” of a common labourer, or even of a genteel swindler, but you are, I hope, too good a moralist to attempt its justification, unless, from a conscientious disregard of works, you are disposed to expunge honesty from the catalogue of duties, and say with Pierre, “ ‘tis a ragged virtue, no more on’t.”

Discard then the odious and insidious cant of Toleration, by which you attempt to palliate your injustice. It is an ungracious permission to exercise a right, which, it would be rebellion against God to renounce. What! give a man permission to worship God according to the dictates of that conscience which he has implanted in his breast! Allow him, indeed, to offer his tribute of prayer and praise to the Author of his being, in conformity to that doctrine, and those

forms, which the instructors of his youth, the advisers of his manhood, and his own habits of thought have engraven on his heart, and interwoven with his nature !

What a bold assumption of authority is this, on the part of a creature whose understanding is a spark, who entered into life as if but yesterday, whose existence is almost ephemeral, whose heart is so often torn with anguish, and every joint in his frame liable to its peculiar ailments ! You have as good a right to grant your fellow-creature your gracious permission to breathe the air of heaven, as to worship its God. If you have a right to grant either as a boon, you have a right to refuse or retract it. Toleration presumes to grant, as a favour, what it would be impiety to withhold, claiming, at the same time, a right to revoke the grant at will,—a claim which nature refuses to sanction, and at which humanity shudders. While it yields to tender consciences its gracious permission to hold communion with their God, it hems them in, on every side, with powerful temptations. It tells them they must lay their account with forfeiting the favour of the rulers of the land, and the patronage of the great—with seeing the the gates of preferment and office barred against them, the road to wealth and influence broken up,—that they must expect to be, more or less, degraded in the social scale,—and en-

counter too often for their peace, the haughty brow, and contemptuous air of the ruling faction. What a preparation for heaven is this, if borne with resignation; if not, what an engine of discontent;—what a net for immeshing souls, and peopling hell! Yet our boasted liberty of conscience is nothing but this hypocritical, mutilated, trammelled thing, called Toleration, though it is the theme of every interested retailer of commonplace declamation.

Thus a Doctor of Divinity, highly beneficed, concluded his speech at a late Bible Society Meeting, with the imposing declaration, that, “he conceived liberty of conscience to be one of the brightest jewels in our happy and glorious Constitution.” Immediately fans fluttered, and a soft and sweet buzz of approbation from the ladies, who are always fond of jewels and finery, greeted the Doctor as he resumed his seat. He was applauded, also, by a few gentlemen who are not in the habit of distinguishing real jewels from glittering paste; who never inquire whether a sentiment be true, but whether it be fashionable. Yet this brightest of jewels, or rather this tarnished bauble, is nothing more than the toleration already described, which unwarrantably and wickedly affects to unfetter the mind, while it leaves the body still loaded with some galling links of persecution’s chain. Yet the Doctor is enrap-

tured with this "diamond of the first water." However, it is but just to relieve the Constitution from the learned Doctor's eulogy, and give the undivided praise of this extraordinary indulgence to those enlightened Statesmen, who acting under the authority of the Constitution, and violating its spirit, have passed Acts of simple toleration, to protect the liberty of the subject, and the inalienable rights of conscience. For this purpose they still employ, under the modern name of Toleration, the remorseless tyrant Persecution, whom, however, in compliment to the age, they have deprived of his stake and faggots, his gibbets and ripping knives, his prisons, deportations, and pillories, and limit his Christian exertions to the use of tests, disqualifications, and other milder processes, directed only against the fame and fortunes of unfashionable worshippers.

Having thrown out these few hints, in the way of expostulation with my Clerical Brethren, I beg leave to invite my other Protestant fellow-subjects, to take, with me, a transient glance at that old bugbear, which, for want of a worse name, is styled POPERY, which has done so much mischief in the Christian world, and is still disturbing the repose of nervous ladies, wise ministers of state, and orthodox keepers of his Majesty's conscience. Whoever is possessed by this demon, or infected with this disease, is a

bad subject, according to Lord Liverpool; a bad Christian, according to the Bible Society; no Christian at all, according to the Archbishop of Dublin; half pagan, half Christian, according to Sir Harcourt Lees; while, among all Orangemen, he is every thing that is unworthy of corporate trust, or social intercourse. The Papist, doubtless, is a frightful animal, when viewed at a distance, through a medium of mist; but a closer inspection will rectify the delusions of vision, and exhibit a system of figure and features, not strikingly different from those of an ordinary Protestant, who happens to be out of temper with his cook for delaying his dinner. When our fears are abated, by this discovery, we shall, on calm investigation, find that various notions, performances, and exhibitions, which formerly filled us with terror, are really inoffensive in their nature, though, perhaps, somewhat whimsical. Many of these were introduced into the Christian Church in its brightest periods, and with the purest intentions,—namely, to allure man from the altars of paganism to those of Christ, by a gentle accommodation to his prejudices;—to obviate ill-founded imputations cast on Christians by the adversaries of the cross;—to endeavour to make religion visible, and tangible, and impress it on the heart through the medium of the senses;—to express the doctrines, and forms of Christian worship, in terms borrowed from Jewish rites,

to which they were analagous,—to attract the admirers of the Pagan mysteries, by giving to the service of the Church a corresponding air of awful obscurity and reverential magnificence. The reigning systems of philosophy had also some influence in forming and modifying the opinions and practice of the early Christians; for philosophers, like ordinary mortals, must often be humoured in order to be attracted. The forms, ceremonies, and opinions, thus originated, were, in their nature, necessarily liable to abuse; while new conversions were constantly augmenting their number.

But has not the Bible itself been abused, even by Protestants who have had it by rote? Is not its religion abused, and every day perverted to purposes of widely-spreading mischief? After the death of the apostles, and their immediate disciples, the pious and innocent teachers of these golden ages thought it their duty, in the absence of miracles, now almost withdrawn from the Church, to win men to the truth by humouring their prejudices. They thought it unwise to denounce *all* inveterate habits, and usages; but suffering the *innocent* part of the practice to continue, they laboured to change its object. A sort of compromise took place. Horrid rites, sensual abominations, and some innocent festivities were blended together with the worship of a pagan idol. The abominations were proscribed, the festivities re-

tained ; but not in honour of Venus, Bacchus, or Daphne, but of some departed saint whose life was a summary of the Christian virtues, or some respected martyr "who greatly fell" in the cause of truth, and clung to his cross in the midst of his tortures. Even Irish records afford some illustration of this. When Ireland was pagan, various fountains were periodically resorted to by the worshippers of some aquatic or amphibious nymph ; but the missionary priests, on their arrival, with more piety than gallantry, ejected the nymph, and put John, or Mary, or Bartholemew in possession of the limpid domain. Again, fires blazed, every year, at midsummer, on the mountains and "high places," in honour of Baal Tineah ; at last, the Priests came, not to extinguish the fires (this would have been too dangerous an enterprise) but to bless them, and allowed the converts to make merry on condition of throwing Baal into the flames, instead of roasting their own children. These terms were agreed to, and the fires burn, to this day, to the great delight, if not edification of our rustics. So that it is not improbable that we Irish, now composed of Papists, with a light sprinkling of Protestants to season the mass, would be worshippers of Baal, at this day, had St. Patrick and his priests relied on the Bible and private judgment for our conversion.

For further illustration, which my limits do

not permit me even to attempt, I refer my Orange reader to the Ecclesiastical History of Doctor Mosheim, a celebrated Protestant divine, and sincere lover of truth, in the pursuit of which, however, he was not obstructed by any charitable weaknesses in favour of popery. By perusing half the first volume of this elegant and instructive work, he could scarcely fail to discover certain important facts, which neither the Rev. Baronet, nor the proselyting Associations have thought fit to disclose. Sir H<sup>t</sup>, indeed, has told him that the papists have borrowed largely from the pagans; but he forgot to inform him that Christ borrowed baptism from the Jews, which, with many other rites, the Jews borrowed from the Heathen, and borrowed for the purpose of facilitating their conversion. Surely many observances are indifferent in their nature, and derive their importance from the use to which they are applied, and the authority on which they rest. Besides, we are not to condemn every thing merely because it is pagan. Were there not some "honest fellows" among the Heathen, who could relish a good chase, a good dinner, and a bottle of wine as pure and old as "Sneyd's eighteen hundred and eleven?" Would the Rev. Baronet proscribe the transports of the chase, and the pleasures of the table, as heathenish? Would he condemn the "honest fellows" of our days to moderate exercise, beef-stakes, and water-gruel? Our Mis-

sionaries, also, are constantly assuring the papists that part of their ceremonial and service is pagan. Mosheim tells us the same, but tells us, also, that these forms and usages were first admitted by the most pious of men, for the best of purposes—the conversion of idolaters, and the salvation of souls. He tell us, also, that this principle of accommodation, to Heathen prejudices, was adopted so early as the second century. Now, can it be believed, that the Christians of that day, whose piety was ardent, whose minds were humble, whose affections were chastened, and who regarded this life as only a passage to a better,—men whose grandsires conversed with the apostles, transmitted their sayings to their children, and cheered the faint-hearted in the rugged path of duty, by their animating examples,—can it be believed that men whose faith was a rock, whose business was charity, whose relaxation was prayer, and whose ambition was heaven, could be weak or wicked enough to graft cancerous branches on the tree of Christ's planting? No, the observances were innocent, though afterwards abused, and unnecessarily multiplied. But let us, in candour, ascribe these subsequent abuses to human frailty, and ages of darkness, and not indulge in virulent invective against our fellow-men, and fellow-Christians, who think they cannot correct the abuse, without exploding the use, nor explode the use, without

arraigning the piety or prudence of the primitive Christians.

Let us never forget that the foundation of almost all the observances of a *purely religious nature*, which distinguish Roman Catholics from Protestants, was laid, according to the latter, so early as the second or third century, while the former extend their origin to the apostolic age itself.—The doctrinal and practical purity, which distinguished the professors of Christianity in these primitive times, is attested by our historians, and resounds from our pulpits; yet the observances which they sanctioned, are the subject of the bitterest invective, not only in their multiplication and abuse, but even in their very *principle*. Is this consistent, is it generous, is it dignified? Do I recommend to Protestants the adoption of these observances? No; if attempted to be imposed on myself, I would resist it at the risk of life. Do I claim for them unqualified approbation? No, for the observances themselves I claim only some indulgence, for the sake of their founders;—I claim little more than good-natured neglect, the absence of virulent abuse, and the “charity of silence.” But for those who adhered to them for ages, whose conscience, neither the sword of the conqueror, the loss of rank, or the terrors of execution, proscription, and poverty, could seduce—for those who gave the amplest proof

which men could give, that they valued their religion more than life, and whatever makes life desirable,—for those I would claim more—I would claim the plaudits of the man of honour, the generous pity of the Christian, and the favour of an enlightened legislature. I would consign theological rancour to proselyting orators; dread of competition in the job market, to Orangemen; and apprehension of revolutionary movements, to women and cowards. In early life, and in the gallery of the Irish House of Commons (for Ireland had then a house of her own) I heard, with strong emotion, a speech of the late William T. Jones, an advocate of Catholic claims, in reply to an exclusionist, who apprehended all manner of evils from concession. The truly Hon. Member after replying to the arguments of his apprehensive opponent, affirmed, in a burst of manly feeling, which extorted the applause of the most hardened monopolists on the opposite benches “that were he convinced that the worst apprehensions of his adversary would be realized, and that the Catholics would repay benefits received with ingratitude and treachery, yet he would not be an advocate for punishing future delinquency with present disability; he would first restore their just rights, and then fight them over again at Aughrim.” If the sentiment included in this honourable and manly declaration had been always the mainspring of political conduct, there would be little fighting

against open rebels by day, or Captain Rock by night. Such policy would be as safe as it is generous. But from the political discussion of the question, I mean, as much as possible, to keep aloof. It has been amply discussed by the ablest men. To their reasoning I could add little or nothing, nor do I like the department of a mere compiler. I return therefore to my Orange friend and his scruples of interest or conscience.

He takes it for granted, I suppose, that the papist never says his prayers, nor has prayers to say ; that he only listens and gazes on, while the priest chants in Latin a mysterious something, half charm, half prayer, and has himself nothing to do or say, except to wonder that so little is said or done. The truth however is, that while the priest is thus employed, and well employed, for what the Orange-man can *prove to the contrary*, the congregation are following him through various forms of prayer, either in good Irish, or the best English their prayer-books afford. Certain also it is, whatever well-informed loyalists may assert, that papists use our three Protestant creeds, namely, the Apostles, the Nicene, the Athanasian, and affirm that we borrowed all three from them, and not they from us. That this is true, I neither affirm nor deny ; for I detest controversy, would extinguish it if possible, and in its place rekindle the lamp of charity, and feed it with the sensibi-

lities of our nature, and the graces of the Christian character. But will it be believed that papists have the Lord's Prayer, offer it up as fervently as we do, and perhaps with as much effect ; that they know, at least, as much of the ten commandments (for I must still keep clear of controversy) as is fully sufficient to make them good subjects, and excellent neighbours. If, then, our vigorous Protestants admit these facts, how can they believe with the A. of Dublin, that the papists have no religion, unless they also believe, as does probably his Grace, that this doctrine and practice are neutralized by the celibacy of their clergy, and periodical starvation. This last charge, however, the papists contend is a foul calumny, for that there is as broad a distinction between starvation and fasting, as between life and death.—They also assert that fasting is firmly founded on Scripture ; that our Saviour, in his own person, has given us a striking example of it, and described its efficacy as most powerful, when combined with prayer ; though he did not in express terms, enjoin it on the faithful ; probably, less corporate bodies might be disgusted with Christianity itself, if clogged with either abstinence or fasting. Then, to soften the prejudices of the Alderman, they humbly submit, that occasional abstinence enables the practitioner to return to the groaning table with improved digestive powers, increased sensibility of palate, and energy of execution. But the hint is

lost on the gourmand ; he hates the prescription and the prescriber ; and Catholics are still excluded from our corporations.

As to the celibacy of the priests, this is a delicate subject ; and here also a good case is made out, but not at all to the satisfaction of the ladies or of the Established Clergy. The latter think, that to make celibacy a qualification for holy orders, is to push the principle of abstinence to a most unconscionable length, and a tacit reflection on themselves who are as devoted to "wedded love" as the gayest of the laity. The ladies are highly offended, calling it an unwarrantable exclusion of their sex from the Church, and an impeachment of the divine ordinance that made us male and female. Being not at all disposed to enter the lists against metaphysical or theological prize-fighters of either sex, I can only state, briefly, what the priests set down on the per contra side of the account, namely, that a clergyman, who adds a wife and family to the cure of the souls of a whole parish, may more justly be charged with "divided allegiance" than the papist who owes spiritual submission to the Pope, and temporal obedience to his King. The great and just complaint of every preacher, in every pulpit, is that temporal things maintain too strong a hold on our affections, while our spiritual concerns hang so loosely upon us, that they are displaced

by every passing breeze and sudden movement. But the King and the State are the sole guarantees, to the papist, of the good things of this life, and this only on condition of good behaviour: the Pope can do no more than insure them the good things of the next, on the same condition; therefore, on the principles of human nature, it is easy to see, in case of a rupture between the spiritual and temporal powers, on which side the scale of popish adherence would preponderate. Were Leo XII., of a querulous disposition, he might indeed with some propriety complain of the divided allegiance of the Catholics of Ireland, because of its inequality, knowing that by far the larger share of the divided article is reserved for his Majesty King George the Fourth, while his own remnant is so meagre, unsubstantial, and intangible. On the same principle, according to the papists, the heart of a married clergyman is unequally divided between his family and his parishioners, the former too often engrossing almost the whole mass, with all its throbbing sensibilities, while the latter seldom retain possession of more than the *pericordium*. The ladies, offended by the apparent insensibility of the Romish priesthood to nuptial endearments, are requested to turn their attention to the many well-educated and highly-gifted Catholic females, who voluntarily and deliberately embrace a single life, which they devote, "without money and without

price," to acts of unwearied beneficence, forming the hearts and enlarging the minds of the poor children of their *own* persuasion—a drudgery which would become intolerable, if exalted piety did not render it delightful. Yet many of these self-devoted ladies are interesting and beautiful, as well as accomplished, and could have readily obtained husbands among the laity of their own persuasion, were they not convinced that there is a state of higher bliss than matrimony, though a sacrament, can afford, for which they can prepare with less interruption beyond the precincts of that sacred institution.

But there is no tenet of the Church of Rome that gives more offence to the Clergy of the Established Church, than the claim of infallibility. Yet this means, I believe, no more than that the representatives of their Clergy, assembled in a general council, duly convened to declare the opinion of the Church on a question involving some important point of doctrine, are directed, in their decision, by the Spirit of God, which they previously invoke. Is this, the Roman Catholics ask, a fit subject of ridicule and reproach, on the part of men who contend that themselves can do nothing acceptable to God without the divine aid? Or do these favourites of heaven claim a monopoly of spiritual, as the Orangemen demand, as their due, the exclusive possession of temporal bless-

ings? Are the pretensions of every Protestant enthusiast to be admitted, or not called in question; and is a great deliberative assembly of Christians to be scoffed at for maintaining, on Scriptural grounds, that the Spirit of God directs their proceedings. Christ, they assert, "built his Church on a rock," denoting its stability, and promised that "the gates of hell should not prevail against it:" on that rock it has stood, visible and immovable, to the present day; yet the promise is violated, if the hellish brood of idolatry and error have been permitted to issue from the gates of hell, and force their way into the Christian sanctuary. To establish the point, still more strongly, various other texts are quoted, which I must omit, as neither on this, or, indeed, on any other point, does my space allow me to do more than throw out a few hints.

But the Pope—that mighty fisherman! that formidable rival of British power and British valour—that roaring lion of popery, who goes about seeking what sleek Protestant he might devour—that dauntless knight of the golden crosier, at whose dread name Sir Harcourt turns pale, Lord Liverpool's caution takes the alarm, and the Chancellor's doubts give place to awful convictions of impending danger. How shall I approach this representative of Gregory the Seventh, and other triple-crowned sovereigns, of high renown and

soaring ambition, whose royalties, instead of waifs and sturgeons, were fertile islands, and newly discovered continents,—who said to the earth, be still, and to the sun, move thou for ever in the zodiac —how shall I approach this exalted spiritual and temporal potentate, who stamps on the ground, and up start armed legions ; who said to Protestant Britain, crush me my imperial foe, and down sunk Napoleon like a fallen star ; and who may hereafter say to O'Connell or Lord Killeen, slay me that sultan of heresy, Sir Harcourt Lees, and a consecrated rose shall reward the pious deed. Who can adequately describe the lion of the seven-hills, his mighty paw, his irresistible jaws ; that universal monarch by whose *permission* Charles the Tenth wields the scepter of France, and Ferdinand, that great antitype of Philip the Second, terrifies the nations with the formidable power of Spain,—who, every year, plucks a fresh quill from the wing of the Austrian eagle—holds Sardinia in bondage—extorts a white palfry from Naples—compels the United States of America to give unrestrained liberty of conscience to the Papists of that vast continent—overawed England into a similar concession to her Canadian subjects,—whose dispensations and bulls, and anathemas fall with more fatal effect than Congreve's rockets—who subverts thrones, plants his foot on the necks of princes, electrifies our Commander-

in-chief, fills the earth, and perhaps the whole solar system, with the terror of his name !

But here, the exclusionist, delighted with the above picture, and with the painter for drawing it, smilingly asks, are these, my good sir, really your ideas of the Pope ? Indeed, sir, or madam, they are not : I give them to the public as *your* ideas, having collected them, by inevitable inference, from your reasonings on the subject of Catholic emancipation, and divided allegiance. As for me, I am fully persuaded that the present Pope is one of the most harmless old gentlemen in Europe ; that such his successor *must* be, and that such have been his predecessors for a considerable period. To ascertain the character of the Popes of the present century, their power, their influence, their capabilities of good or evil, I do not push my researches into the darkness of the middle ages, nor to the tempestuous period of the Reformation, when the influence of religion on men's minds, was inversely as the fury with which they contended for it. I do not look for the character of the present Pope in the mouldering records of the twelfth century : nor can I persuade myself that any of the successors of St. Peter, who lived in our times, have sat for that picture of unprincipled usurpation, and ruthless ambition, which, in remote ages, had humbled, to the dust, imperial pride and power. But now, ambition beats

as temperately in the breast of the Bishop of Rome, as in that of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The most aspiring ambition, when all hopes of gratification are withdrawn, flags, and subsides into sullen contentment. A man never feels an inordinate desire of flying in the air, because he is destitute of wings; and the Popes of our day are quite convinced that the means are wanting which enabled many of their remote predecessors “to shake one world with the thunders of the other.” Men are no longer machines in the hands of an aspiring priest. They can not be persuaded that God would be served by violating his commandments, and dissolving the bonds of society. The laity are, every where, so enlightened, that the influence of the clergy, when directed to *their own aggrandisement*, is almost extinguished: that it may be kept alive, it must be exerted, not for their own interest, but for that of their flocks. In Ireland, especially, this is the case. Under the Cortes of Spain the authority of the Pope was reduced as low as was consistent with his supremacy, and the wretched Ferdinand, that most incurable of bigots, outstrips, in his blind zeal for its restoration, even the Pope himself, whose humanity and good sense refused to consent to the re-establishment of the Inquisition. But the indignation of his *Catholic* subjects would, long since, have hurled this *popish* tyrant from his throne, were he not upheld thereon by a foreign force, acting

under the orders of legitimacy, in whose moral code, savage cruelty, and inveterate bigotry, are venial offences, or vigorous virtues. What a maturity of judgment, even in their infant state, has been displayed by the Catholic republics of South America ! How little are Bolivar, and his compatriots disposed to become the tools of papal usurpation. In France, if we search for bigotry, we *must go to Court*; there we shall find it closeted with legitimacy, each endeavouring to advance its own selfish views by supporting the other. In Ireland, we find the Catholic prelates directing ecclesiastical matters, as they please—the Pope attending to their remonstrances, adopting their views, and giving completion to their wishes, by ratification in regular form, and the sanction of official signature. In short, the Pope is nothing more than the mere spiritual head of the Roman Catholic Church, and its centre of union ; and, even in this capacity, his authority is occasionally encroached on, sometimes by Protestant, but more frequently by Catholic princes. What an insult, then, to a mighty monarch is the wretched cant of divided allegiance—allegiance parcelled out between the sovereign of the British empire, and a feeble ecclesiastic, employed in fingering his rosary, weighing mortal sins, and consecrating Bishops nominated, or recommended, by those whom he dare not refuse. Exclusionists ought to consider that

to charge the papists with divided allegiance is to affirm, in other words, that his Majesty holds the affections of his Catholic subjects in joint tenancy with, what Orangemen call, a drivelling old papist, who, as *such*, according to Mr. Wolff, lives “on vegetables and sour crout,” in an unfashionable old mansion, on the bank of a muddy rivulet. Is this complimentary to the monarch? Is it the language of loyalty?

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Popular Objections.—Popery unchanged and unchangeable.—Disregard of Oaths.—Exclusive Salvation.—Archbishop of Dublin.—A startling Inference from his Grace's celebrated Antithesis.*

WHEN the restraints of conscience are removed, nothing is easier than to call an honest man a rogue, and to treat him accordingly, if injustice be supported by power. To justify oppression, under the pretence of promoting the cause of truth, it is frequently and confidently asserted, that popery is unchanged and unchangeable. Hence it is inferred, that the disabilities and sufferings of the papist should be perpetual. If the above position means that the doctrines of Christianity, as held by Roman Catholics, are unchanged, I believe the position is true; and it does them credit. All

our ablest divines, and among the rest, his Grace the Archbishop of Cashel (Dr. Laurence) in his late Visitation Charge, allow that all the essentials of Christianity are preserved in the Roman Catholic Church. It is, therefore, no slight praise to say that they still steadily adhere to these great truths, and will always do so; that they are not “tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine;” that they are not liable to those varieties, and fluctuations of opinion, which have discredited Protestantism, and been so often lamented by its best friends.\* The Roman Catholics ought to be highly gratified by this compliment; and thus, among the Baalams of our day, as of old, the lips which open to curse, pronounce a blessing. But, if it be meant, that the same encroaching spirit of frantic ambition, which animated ecclesiastical tyrants in ages of darkness, when men’s faculties lay dormant, when credulity only was broad awake, and ready to believe, that whatever was given to the Church, was given to God;—when Popes thought, or pretended to think, that the affairs of this world could not prosper without their intervention,—that they were the delegates of the Most High, and the instruments of his providential administration;—if it be asserted that such are the claims of the Holy See, or the pretensions of the Roman Catholic Church, or the

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\* See Appendix, No. 1.

opinions of the Catholic laity of the present day,—the imputation is equally false, unprincipled, and insidious. It is refuted by the daily practice of every district in the Catholic world, by the acts of independent States, whether republican, or monarchical, by the solemn declarations of universities, canonists, and professors of divinity, and by the oaths, either sworn, or tendered, of the whole Catholic body. I do not envy the casuist, or divine, who circulates Bibles without note or comment, and resists such evidence as this. I do not envy, but I am astonished at him. I am astonished that he has imbibed so little of the spirit of Christian morality, as to flatter himself that the pecuniary relief, which he dispenses to a few famishing individuals, can atone for the sentence of proscription grounded on false, frivolous, or uncertain pretences, which he pronounces, in the hardness of his heart, against the most numerous community of Christian worshippers. He cannot but know, in spite of his casuistry, that by indulging in invective, and withholding concession, he strikes at the character and prosperity of millions; that he obstructs their chances of promotion; endeavours to exclude them from the high road to wealth; sends the pangs of disappointment to prey like vultures on their hearts; and consigns them to a state of hopeless degradation, while he excites and inflames all the vindictive and malevolent passions to which the

human frame is liable. What says the Bible to this? Lay your hand on your heart; invoke the Spirit of Him who died on the cross for the "emancipation" of sinners, and answer the question.

To talk of papal dispensations, and disregard of oaths, on the part of Catholics, *must* be the cant of party spirit promoting its own selfish views, and not the language of conviction or truth. Were an estimate to be made of the comparative credibility of Protestants and Catholics, *as such*, the decision, on the principles of common sense, would be in favour of the latter. The sanctity of an oath has been interposed between the latter and the attainment of power, station, rank, and the emoluments of office, and the barrier has proved effectual. They passed through the ordeal, unsinged, and unsullied. In similar circumstances, I hope the conduct of the Protestants would be equally firm, and conscientious, if put to the test. Here, however, we have only hope in favour of the Protestants, but on the side of Catholics we have certainty. The former *might* sacrifice the world, and its seductions, to their sense of the obligation of an oath, the latter, *have actually done so*, have been doing it for ages, and are doing so still. But where was the Pope, and his dispensing power, all this time? and why does he not, even now, as joint tenant with his Majesty, look with pity on the privations

of his Irish subjects, for such they must be, if they yield him allegiance in the whole, or in part? allegiance, in propriety of speech, with deference to the premier, signifying the duty which a subject owes to his sovereign. But as it would be extravagant and unjust, to charge the Protestant body with a disregard of oaths, because, not having been put to the test, they cannot appeal to their conduct in refutation of the charge; is it not monstrous impudence and wickedness to bring against the Catholics a similar charge, which can be so easily repelled by the positive evidence of facts, and the incontrovertible testimony of successive generations?

Oh! but papists deny salvation to heretics, and reserve it exclusively for themselves. Then it seems they are exclusionists and monopolists, as well as the Orangemen. This is a heavy charge, and creditable to neither. If the papists affirm that heaven is purely Catholic, and refuses admission to Protestants, the Orangemen swear that the Constitution is Protestant, and will not receive Catholics. But, as this language may be nothing more than the expression of irritated feeling, on both sides, it ought to be forgiven, if it terminate in empty noise, and passionate ejaculation. But the Orangeman evidently proceeds to overt acts; he not only says, to the Catholic, you are inadmissible, but he labours hard to keep him so; he

moves heaven and earth to perpetuate the disqualification; and his efforts have been crowned with success. Thus, his design of injuring his neighbour is not only conceived, but expressed,—not only expressed, but carried into full and effective operation and action. Now, if it can be proved that the Papist not only denies salvation to Protestants, but strains every nerve, to keep the gates of heaven barred against him,—that his efforts have been successful hitherto, and likely to be so hereafter,—if these facts can be clearly established, I would punish both parties—the papist, by continuing his exclusion from the full benefits of the Constitution, a few years longer; and the Orangeman, by appointing a commission of inquiry into corporate abuses; the commissioners to consist entirely of liberal Protestants, to the exclusion of Orangemen and Papists. But, *non constat*, why the commission should not immediately issue against the corporations; and in the mean time, more evidence should be sought for, to prove that the papists have *successfully* laboured to promote and perpetuate the spiritual exclusion above-mentioned; but in common justice, let them be deemed innocent till their guilt be fully and fairly established. If the charge mean no more than that they entertain a mere speculative opinion that Protestants cannot be saved, this, in its rigorous sense, is maintained by some theologians, and denied by others. Of this we have lately had a remarkable instance

in Ireland. But let us suppose it to be the universal opinion of the popish doctros; still I am convinced that the accusation, though theologically true, is practically false. Every candid Protestant, who has had opportunities of ascertaining the fact, will agree with me, that educated Roman Catholics are much more charitable in their sentiments, on this subject, than individuals of the same rank in other Christian sects. Even the Irish peasant, while he follows the hearse of a Protestant neighbour, who had been, in his life-time, a kind hearted man and good landlord, regrets with a sigh, that his sojourn in purgatory must unavoidably be long; but is fully assured that his good works will bring him out triumphantly at last. But, in case the deceased had been an oppressive landlord, or corrupt magistrate—characters not uncommon in Ireland—the peasant regards his fate with the orthodox rigour of a Kildare-street Protestant; for him he seldom thinks of purgatory, and still less of heaven. Will it be asserted that Protestant peasants,—that the serious ultra-Protestants of the Established Church, and they are a numerous fraternity, have more charity than this for the departed souls of superstitious papists? Long experience and observation enable me to answer confidently in the negative. The truth is, the imagination of the Protestant saint is more largely replenished with terrific representations of endless tortures, than that of the Catholic

saint. Good works, *per se*, have no weight with the former; they have much with the latter, perhaps by way of set off. This may be erroneous doctrine; but it certainly tends to invigorate charity. So does the doctrine of purgatory: it enables the survivor to hope for a temporary residence for a deceased friend, of any religious persuasion, till he be fit for heaven. Also prayers for the dead have a tendency to soften the heart; and many a sigh and pious ejaculation, from a wounded spirit, escapes to heaven in favour of a departed benefactor, while his heresy is forgotten, or consigned to a singeing process in purgatory. The Catholic saint fixes his thoughts more frequently on the mercy of God, the Protestant saint on his justice. The former thinks that prayers, sacrifice, oblations, &c., are never offered up in vain. The latter has but few of these to offer, and these few he conceives to be quite ineffectual, not only without faith, but without faith consisting of a determinate number of articles, explained, in a determinate manner, into a mysterious meaning embraced with a fervour proportioned to its incomprehensibility. Whoever entertains a different view of the subject, him he regards as a lost and perishing sinner. When the religious Catholic dwells on the tender mercies of God, and the religious Protestant on his inflexible justice, each is right, as far as he goes; but the mental habit of the former is surely more favour-

able, than that of the latter, to feelings of charity for the souls and bodies of his fellow-creatures. We ought to form our judgment of religious sects from the *general spirit* of their religion, from their ordinary feelings, sentiments, and conduct, and not from the metaphysical abstractions and dogmas of interested or presumptuous theologians. I cannot persuade myself that it is the real opinion of the Archbishop of Dublin that Arius, Pelagius, Faustus Socinus, Servetus, Price, Lindsey, &c., are damned to all eternity, though he acknowledged in substance before the Committee of the Lords, that such is the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed, and consequently of the Church of England. But let us recollect with what reluctance he made the acknowledgment, how often he parried the questions addressed to him by the ingenious pertinacity of his examiner, with what dexterity he attempted to baffle the querist by drawing him off from the damnatory clauses of the creed, by enclosing him in its parenthesis, and involving him in its metaphysical obscurities. Nor did he submit, at last, till his skill had been exerted in vain. Then, indeed, it was, in *substance*, acknowledged by a Protestant Archbishop, who, without contributing to its funds, declares himself the warm advocate of the Bible Society, and consequently of its great principle, the unlimited right of private judgment,—it was, I say, acknowledged *substantially*, by his Grace the Archbishop

of Dublin, that the Arians, who once constituted, perhaps, a majority of the Christian world, that all the Pelagians, Semiarians, and Socinians, who passed into eternity before our time, have, "without doubt perished everlasting," and that the followers of this doctrine, in our day, many of whom in moral conduct, are models of imitation, and, in science, either patrons, or proficients, "cannot be saved," but "*shall* without doubt perish everlasting."\* Had the same searching questions, on the same subject, been administered to the Doctors Curtis, Murray, and Doyle, they would, I doubt not, have made the same acknowledgment, though with less charitable reluctance than his Grace the Archbishop of Dublin. But, in addition, they would, I presume, like other Roman Catholics, declare their conviction, on the grounds both of reason and Scripture, that the dreadful sentence may not extend to invincible ignorance; that circumstances of birth, education, and early impressions, will probably be admitted in *mitigation* at the bar of heaven, (here the importance of purgatory would flash on the minds of the popish Doctors,) and, if the conscience of the accused should not condemn him, at that bar, that the mercy of the Judge will acquit him. Whether this be a part of that system of casuistry, which his Grace imputes to educated men, who make up their minds to live and die in the popish

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\* See Appendix, No. 3.

faith, I know not ; but if it be, I certainly like it better than any of the many specimens of that ingenious art, which I have lately met with in the numerous publications of our Bible Society divines. Indeed, the artless integrity, and manly simplicity, of his Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, will, probably, reject the use of such casuistical refinements, in behalf of the departed souls of *popish idolaters* ; and the other clerical “lovers of truth,” in the bosom of our Church, will be comforted by his example, in their firm adherence to a rigorous theology.

I am almost confirmed in this opinion, by the celebrated words of his Grace’s first Visitation Cherge—“the one (Catholics) possessing a Church “ without a Religion, the other (Protestant Dissenters) possessing a Religion without a Church.” These, I believe, were the words as they originally stood. But they gave offence, and out came an emended edition in which the words ran thus—“the one possessing a Church, without “ what we can properly call a Religion, and the “ other possessing a Religion, without what we “ can properly call a Church.” Indeed the passage is evidently elliptical; his Grace supplies the ellipsis in the part which gave offence; let us supply it in the *remaining* places, and the passage will read thus—“the one possessing what we can “ properly call a Church, without what we can “ properly call a Religion ; and the other posses-

“ sing what we can properly call a Religion, “ without what we can properly call a Church.” To the emended passage was annexed a note, with which I first present the reader, but, (to avoid the frequent repetition of his Grace’s words,) in distinct verses, with a few short remarks on each.

#### HIS GRACE’S NOTE.

1. Protestants, whose first principle it is to hold the free use of Scripture to be essential to true religion,
2. can never admit that to be true religion which forbids the use of the Scripture:
1. This tenet, whether held or not held by Protestants, is not true: Adam, Cain, and many of the patriarchs had true religion before the Scriptures were written: surely Abraham, the father of the faithful, and Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, had true religion before the Bible existed; and did not the multitudes, converted to Christianity by Christ and his Apostles, before a line of the New Testament was written, “ possess” true religion? But, surely, all these had not the “ free use, nor any use, of Scriptures.”
2. Whether they admit it or not, we have seen that true religion might exist without the Scriptures: but it is not true that the Church of Rome forbids the use of the Scripture. They acknowledge the

right of every one to read the Scripture; but they insist that the Church of Christ has authority to limit and regulate, for good reasons, the *exercise* of that right; as the legislature limits and regulates the exercise of our natural rights, for the greater security of the rights themselves.

3. nor can they, who build the entire profession of the Christian Faith on the Word of God,

3. All Christians build the entire profession of their Faith on the Word of God; (O! that they would build their practice also on the same foundation!) but the Catholics contend that the appellation is not confined to the books received by us as canonical, but extends also to the Apocrypha and tradition. From the Apocrypha, however, though not exclusively, they derive, I believe, but one single tenet—Prayers for the Dead,—a practice not very wicked, and which recommends itself strongly to human feelings. If they be mistaken as to the canonicity of the books (which is somewhat doubtful) they cannot be much injured by their perusal, as *our* “Church doth read ‘them for example of life and ‘instruction of manners,’ though ‘it doth not apply them to establish any doctrine.’” As

to tradition—that many observances and precepts of inferior importance, conducive to piety, though *not essential* to salvation, and therefore not recorded in the New Testament, might have been given or approved of, by Christ or his Apostles, is surely not incredible, and can never be disproved. These, the Catholics affirm, and attempt to prove, have been preserved by the tradition of the Church, which also includes the opinions of the early Fathers on many points of discipline, doctrine, and Scriptural interpretation. The case then stands thus—Catholics are laudably anxious that no part of the Word of God should be lost: Protestants are as laudably anxious that the word of man should, by no possibility, be added to the Word of God. Should we not, in charity, applaud the principle of each, and only regret that they quarrel on the subject?

4. concede the attribute of Christianity, in its vital character and in its proper sense, to a form of belief, which subjects the Word of God to the authority of man.

4. So far as the last words of this verse allude to the charge of “ forbidding the use of the Scriptures” I have already touched on the subject by stating the real doctrine of

the Church of Rome: so far as they relate to the authority, claimed by that Church, to interpret the Scriptures for the laity,—this is precisely *what the Church of England has done*, in its Articles, Homilies, &c., as already shown at large. So far both Churches were right. But when they proceeded to encourage, or consent to enactments imposing penalties or disqualifications on recusants, there they were awfully wrong. In endeavouring to maintain *their own views* of religious truth, they violated the divine morality of the Gospel of Christ. But, for many years, these two great bodies, which almost divide the Christian world between them, seem to have looked back, with shame and regret, on their mutual infringements of the rights of conscience, and to have commenced a new career of charity and Christian forbearance. It is however painful to see the Catholics likely to outstrip the Protestants in the race of benevolence. In Ireland, at least, Protestantism, among some of its votaries, still retains its old *popular* signification of hatred to papists.

The remainder of the Note seems to be merely an apology for the obnoxious words, (and yet a justification of them,) to the full benefit of which his Grace is entitled ; I therefore pass on from the note to the text itself. The passage, for its length, is pregnant with meaning, to an unexampled degree ; and his Grace himself allows it “ has given offence.” Let us treat it as we do the natural fruit of the orange-tree ; let us squeeze it gently, express its juice, and ascertain whether it be balsamic or caustic. The papists have nothing that Protestants, without polluting their lips, can call a religion. All is superstition and idolatry. How, indeed, could their unfortunate laity, who have not the “use of their Scripture,” possess “Christianity in its vital character and proper sense.” Their clergy keep the Scriptures all to themselves ; they are Biblical monopolists ; surely, then, on his Grace’s own principle, the popish priests must be excellent Christians,—Christians, in “the vital character, and proper sense” of the term. They have “the free use of the Scriptures ;” they hold them fast ; they will not part with a single leaf, with or without note or comment. They keep all the text to the mselves, and give nothing but the comment to the people. Therefore, the popish clergy must be the best Christians on earth, while the popish laity are the worst. But the papists “possess a Church”—what the most squeamish Protestant might fairly call a Church, of course, because it is so excellent and apostolical. This

we might, with his Grace, naturally expect, as their clergy, who, like their brethren of other sects, call themselves the Church without including the laity, enjoy a monopoly of Bibles, and, consequently, constitute an admirable Church in their clerical character. But this Church has much more to recommend it. It rises in pyramidal beauty, from the lowest clerical orders, passing through vicars, rectors, archdeacons, deans, bishops, metropolitans, archbishops and patriarchs, contracting as it rises, till it terminate in his Holiness. It is, indeed, a magnificent structure, of which the Pope is the spire, and the cardinals the Corinthian capitals! I do not wonder that his Grace should admire it, but am surprised that our Church has stopped short, and does not by his advice, make some further approximation to its apostolical perfection. What rational objection could be started against Protestant Cardinals, and a Protestant Pope? And is not Dublin of sufficient importance to be the residence of a Protestant patriarch? But, the dissenters—they have what every Church Protestant may call a religion par excellence, for they have Bibles and private judgment in abundance: but, unfortunately, they have nothing which we can properly call a Church. They have no hierarchy, no tithes, no glebe, no large tracts of bishop's land, their teachers subsist only on voluntary contributions, and the scanty pittance of a *regium donum*. Surely this

sad state of things is quite inconsistent with the idea of a good sound Apostolic Church.

But is there not something apparently paradoxical in all this? The papists possess a pure Apostolical Christian Church, yet, having nothing that deserves the name of religion, they cannot be Christians; while the Protestant dissenters, who possess the Christian Religion in perfection, cannot belong to the Church of Christ, as they have no Church at all. Will his Grace explain this: or are we to receive it as a mystery which our faculties cannot penetrate? From his Grace's position, however, if true, another and a startling truth plainly and *inevitably* follows. For, if the dissenters "possess" a true religion, and are in the enjoyment of that inestimable blessing for more than two centuries, without possessing any thing deserving the name of a Church, it unquestionably follows, that a Church is not essential, or necessary to religion; and a strong presumption arises, that it is altogether useless in a Christian community. This presumption is strengthened, if not ripened into certainty, by the other branch of his Grace's antithesis. For, if the well-constructed popish hierarchy has not been able to exclude a thousand errors and superstitions from the Christian system, it is scarcely too much to infer that a Church is useless; but, if the hierarchy itself introduced these errors, and

superstitions, then, surely, a hierarchy (and his Grace will not allow that any other form deserves the name of a Church) may be, or rather has, a strong tendency to be not only useless, but pernicious. If this be so, people of England, what is the inference? That a good Church is good for nothing but to be either a distributer or monopolist of Bibles. But mere laymen might be either. And what follows from this? Let the reader answer the question.

But when his Grace uttered the ominous words, which produced these remarks, was he, or was he not serious. That he was serious, in his expressions of high dislike of the irreligion of the popish laity, at least, is so obvious, that we may conclude his hopes of their felicity, in a future state, are rather desperate. This, with the reluctant confession above mentioned, gives us additional reason for believing that exclusive salvation is a tenet not peculiar to papists. Indeed, close observation on what is passing about us in life, would convince every unprejudiced man that this obnoxious doctrine is held by the uncharitable members of every Christian sect, and rejected by the benevolent of every communion. Such is men's practice, however doctors may pronounce *ex cathedra*. Why, then, should it be imputed exclusively to papists, and made a ground of political exclusion?

But was his Grace aware of the attack on the Church, evidently implied in his antithesis, and, if so, was he serious here also? If he was, and is still of the same mind, let us entreat him to confine his project of abolition to the temporalities of the Church, and spare the Church herself. Away—if his Grace will have it so—away with tithe that “slough of a slavish superstition,” or rather that oppressive and degrading yoke, which the cupidity of popery had imposed on Christian necks, in ages of darkness, and from which our Reformers unaccountably forgot or neglected to disengage us. But here I, for one, would stop short, I would not proceed with his Grace, to secularize the Bishop’s lands, as they would afford a suitable and sufficient support for the whole body of the Church. I do not deny that, by the abolition of tithes, one great obstacle to the conversion of the papists would be removed; that our beneficed clergy might recover the affections of their parishioners, which in too many instances they have forfeited; and that the spiritual authority of the Church over men’s consciences, would be increased, while her temporal power, that great source of discontent, would be diminished. But here I would tie up his Grace’s hands, and entreat him to reconsider the subject; not without hopes of reconciling him, in time, to moderate measures.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Objections continued.—Resumption of forfeited Estates.—Coronation Oath.—Divided Allegiance.—Protestant Ascendancy.—Mr. Brownlow.*

FASHION extends its sway to arguments as well as to pantaloons. About fifty years ago, the argument, founded on a fear of the resumption of forfeited estates, was all the rage. It was the sur-tout, within whose ample folds every loyal Protestant wrapt himself, to weather the storm of the Catholic claims. Every year, however, the scissors of time have been gradually curtailing its dimensions; so that it is now reduced to a mere shred. The most intolerant Protestant, when he wants money, never scruples to sell his estate to the rankest Papist; to grant him a profitable lease, on payment of a large fine, and borrow his money on mortgage, without any conscientious resolution of punctually discharging the interest. These operations, repeated, year after year, have at last banished the above-mentioned argument from respectable company, and “resumption of forfeited estates” now frightens only those who have no estates to lose, namely Orange operatives, and groundlings. “Coronation Oath,” also, has had its day; but now, like the former argument, it serves only to give importance to the conversation

of the vulgar. While it was in vogue, we were called upon to believe that it not only restrained the monarch, in his executive capacity, from *unconstitutional* violations of law; but that, in his legislative capacity, it restricted him in the *constitutional* exercise of his undoubted prerogative. We were called upon to believe, that the Lords and Commons, in framing the Coronation Oath, meant to say to his Majesty—We, your Majesty's Lords and Commons, hate the papists, most devoutly, at present; but,—lest we should cease at any time hereafter to hate them, with equal cordiality, and, from any change of circumstances, should deem it prudent, just, and wise, to relax or repeal the penal laws in force against them,—we think it necessary to bind your Majesty, by an oath, to reject any bills for the relief of papists which may pass through our houses, in an unguarded moment, and thus relieve us from the consequences of our own folly or stupidity. This reasoning involved men of common sense in a painful dilemma; if they admitted it, they felt themselves dolts; if they rejected it, they were considered as disloyal.

The fashion of opposing the rightful claims of the Catholics, on the ground of divided allegiance, was next introduced, or rather revived—and by the premier himself. We have smiled at this argument already; and indeed its advocates,

like the augers of old, can scarcely forbear, when they meet, from laughing in each others faces. Whatever, may be *pretended*, it has not the least weight with any educated man, unless his reading be confined to Hebrew, or pure mathematics, and his observations to the walls of a college library. If we visit foreign countries, we have the evidence of our senses that the Pope, as to temporals, is a cipher, and preserves with difficulty, even in Catholic states, a remnant of his spiritual authority. If we stay at home, and consult the historian and traveller, we find that such is the case, not only in a few European nations, but throughout the whole Catholic world. We find also, that the authority of the Pope, over the Catholic Clergy of Ireland, is incomparably more feeble than the *mere ecclesiastical* authority of the King over the Protestant Clergy. And, if it be true, that the allegiance of the Roman Catholics is divided between the King and the Pope; is it not equally true, that the allegiance of the Scotch Presbyterians, of the English and Irish Presbyterians, of the Independents, &c. &c., is divided between the King and their respective Churches, which Churches and their rulers lie at our doors, and are able to avail themselves of every opportunity of plotting against us, (which, however, no one in his senses can apprehend;) while the modern Hildebrand, that object of dismay to Sir Harcourt Lees and Lord Liverpool, slumbers in his palace,

in the southern extremity of Europe, while his whole military force can scarcely protect his person from the banditti of his own diocese.

X “Protestant Ascendency” and “Protestant Constitution” also furnish the friends of exclusion and public peculation, with favourite watch-words, and a notable argument. This barbarous jargon has been, for many years, in Ireland, the substitute, in too many instances, for official integrity, and conscientious discharge of duty. By the due intonation of these phrases, followed up, at public dinners, by the toast of the *Glorious and Immortal Memory*, many loyal persons have thought themselves entitled to cheat the revenue, to defraud public offices, extort illegal fees, and create lucrative jobs for themselves or their retainers, at the expense of an impoverished people. When inquiries were lately made, and a check about to be applied to these enormities, these loyal gentlemen raised a deafening outcry against the commissioners. They seemed to think that their loyalty was a good patent for peculation and extortion of every description. Many of our Clergy, finding that the immense revenues of the Church, so vastly disproportioned to the Protestant population, were attracting the attention of parliament, threw themselves into the scale of the exclusionists, and joined in the cry of “Protestant Ascendency” and “Protestant Constitution,” affirming that Pa-

pists had no religion "in its vital character,"—that the lower classes were quite regardless of emancipation,—and that turbulent demagogues, only hungered for the loaves and fishes of the State. Let it be incidentally remarked, that this unfounded assertion has been triumphantly refuted by the forty-shilling freeholders, and payers of the Catholic rent.] In short, the *exclusive* right of representing a county, city, or borough, in parliament, of filling every place of honour, trust, or profit, from the highest to the lowest, in the gift either of the crown, the corporations, the grand jury, or private individuals, and of taxing the Catholics, to any amount, by acts of vestry for objects beneficial only to themselves, is claimed by the ascendency men; among whom it is an established maxim, that no foolish delicacy, on the part of the loyal holder of such office, place, or privilege, should interfere with the most profitable discharge of its functions. These profitable operations escape the notice of the Clergy, whose spiritual avocations allow them only to lend their strenuous support to the system in general, but leave them no time to watch it in detail, or detect its numerous obliquities. The slightest departure from this system, though sanctioned by the legislative relaxations of the penal code, is denominated by Orangemen, a shameful infringement of the rights of Protestant loyalists.

Such is “Protestant Ascendency” in practice: let us glance at its theory.

X On what is this ascendancy founded; on what great truth does it rest? Is it bottomed on any acknowledged principle of justice, of moral or physical superiority? The last will scarcely be pleaded: Paddy has refuted it with his bayonet at Waterloo, and, unhappily, is always ready to refute it again with his cudgel. The plea of moral superiority has indeed been loudly urged as a ground of political ascendancy. O! with what a shameful contempt of the spirit of Gospel morality, according to which, the very claim of superiority brands the claimant with inferiority! But the moral truths of the Gospel are now too plain for the taste, and too inconvenient for the purposes of the *loyal* Protestants of Ireland, who have learned from the Bible Society doctors to regard “your moral man” with little veneration. Let us then shut up our Bibles, “circulate,” without consulting them, and pass on to some other source of reasoning. Is it, then, the *fact* that this moral superiority really exists? Is it actually true that there are, among the Orangemen of Ireland, many better poets than Mr. T. Moore; and among its corporate bodies, many better public speakers than Mr. Wise of Waterford? In legal knowledge and resources, is Mr. O’Connell outstripped by many of our Protestant bar? Have we, among our Clergy,

many greater masters of pulpit eloquence than the Rev. Mr. Keogh, the Roman Catholic Priest?—Has not Mr. Kinsella, a very young professor in the despised popish college of Carlow, proved himself a full match, in the field of controversy, for the most eminent of our veteran theologians, and more than a match in Christian meekness and moderation? Are not the small shopkeepers and farmers of the popish province of Munster confessedly and vastly superior in intellectual culture, to the Protestants of Ulster of the same rank?—Was not the late Doctor Purcell, in spite of his popery, the most celebrated physician in the city of Dublin, and are there not, this moment, in that city, medical men of the same religion, who, though his inferiors in professional eminence, are, probably, his equals in professional skill? Are not the Catholic merchants and manufacturers of Dublin and Cork, in spite of the disadvantages under which they labour, as intelligent and active as their Protestant rivals?]

But let us give up this point—let us suppose that the Rev. J. Graham, the Orange Chaplain, is a better poet than Tommy Moore; that Sir Harcourt Lees far outstrips in pulpit eloquence and Christian ethics, the Rev. Mr. Keogh; that, besides Dr. Magee, there are, among our Protestant divines, many abler casuists than Doctor Doyle, &c.—let us, I say, give up the point at once, and suppose

the moral superiority to be all on the side of the Protestant loyalists. But, here, let us ask, is not this moral superiority, in its nature, entirely *accidental*? If it be all on the side of the Protestant loyalists this year, might it not change sides in twenty years more, and belong as exclusively to his Majesty's Catholic subjects. In this event, are we to erect Catholic on the ruins of Protestant ascendancy? This we must do, if the argument of moral superiority be good, unless Sir Harcourt should put it down with the bayonets of his "211,000 armed Orangemen." But as putting down an argument, by an armed force, is very different from a logical refutation of it, the papists would be still on the watch to catch Sir Harcourt napping, and, on the first fair opportunity, would revive their claim to Catholic ascendancy, founded on their moral superiority. The truth is, that the argument is good for nothing, except to perpetuate, among two great classes of his Majesty's subjects, a spirit of controversy, as rancorous and deadly as that excited by the movements of the different Bible Societies; each party endeavouring to prove itself the paragon of moral excellence, and its adversaries the slaves of incurable ignorance, bigotry, and prejudice.

When a man mounts his horse, we immediately recognise not only the fact, but the principle of his ascendancy over it. The horse is an animal

of an inferior nature, he is the man's property, he has no rights, and, *respecting him*, the man has no duties. His duty to himself, indeed, requires that he should not injure his property, or harden his heart by habits of cruelty to an innocent and useful animal; but, without violating any moral precept, he may make him labour moderately for his benefit, and spend his life in his service. Is not the ascendancy claimed by our dashing loyalists, at least, as rigorous as that of the man over his horse; though the Catholic and the Protestant are of the same nature; though the former has rights which ought to be sacred; though the latter has corresponding duties, for the fulfilment of which he is awfully responsible to God; and though any claim, on his part, to the person of the Catholic as his property, would excite the indignation and horror of the whole civilized world.— Yet, in despite of man's nature, in contempt of human rights, in defiance of that all-just and all-powerful Being, to whom he must render an account of his violated duties, he raises his voice against the fair claims of his Catholic neighbours, fellow-subjects, and countrymen, though founded on the grand and immutable principles of justice! He darkens their brightest prospects,—throws insurmountable obstacles in the way of their fairest ambition,—condemns them to draw blanks in the lottery of life,—deprives them of their fair chance of honourable or lucrative employment,—acts

the part of the sullen and pampered menial, who spurns from the palace gate the humble claimant for admission,—and, in the language of Deity, and arrogance of humanity, tells a petitioning nation, “thus far shalt thou go, and no farther!” The horse is acknowledged to be the property of his master, and is pampered ; the peasant is said, with cruel irony, to be his own master, and is starving. Famine, oppression, a keen sense of his political degradation, and feelings of bitter resentment for his insulted religion, hurry him into occasional acts of insubordination, which exclude and frighten from our shores, that capital which would afford him employment, and comfortable subsistence.—He knows, with Lord Redesdale, that there is one law for the rich, and another for the poor ; one law for the Protestant, and another for the Catholic ; he feels that the law is not his friend, and he is, accordingly, no friend to the law ; but is fully persuaded, and with reason, that some of our laws are infringements of our Constitution. Thus is the tranquillity of the nation disturbed, its improvement retarded, its resources neglected, its morals corrupted, and the majority of its inhabitants insulted and oppressed, by the operation of the cruel, vindictive, insolent, immoral, and unchristian principle of ascendancy ?

Then, why cling, with such tenacity, to this wicked principle ? The term *Protestant* prefixed

to Ascendency shows the *ostensible* ground of its claim. So, then, the Orangemen claim a monopoly of political rights, because they are Protestant—that is, orthodox believers, while the Catholics and Dissenters are heretics and schismatics. Thus, Protestant Ascendency proves to be nothing more or less than the *spiritual supremacy* of one class of religionists arrogating to themselves exemption from error, treating all other sects as infidels or incorrigible heretics, and delivering them up to the secular arm, to be punished in this life, for the salvation of their souls in the next. Is not this the essential spirit of the Popery of the twelfth century? So that the Orangemen of Ireland, though some of them have lately formed a Society, calling itself “The Benevolent and Religious Orange Institution,” (Oh, what an awful abuse of language!) are in reality political papists of the old stamp! I do not charge them with going to mass and adoring the host, nor with adopting the musty morality of that huge popish publication—the Douay version of the Bible; but I charge them with *devoutly* moving *heaven* and earth to keep their fellow-creatures in a state of partial bondage, for their own mercenary purposes,—I charge them with zealous and unremitting efforts to preserve to themselves a monopoly in the trade of jobbing and public peculation, under the blasphemous pretence of doing God an acceptable service,—I charge them with grafting

on their creed the worst part of ancient popery —its persecuting spirit,—in an age which has chased away that spirit of darkness from the most respectable nations of the Catholic world, and has nearly expelled it from the remainder. Can it be denied that every penal or disabling statute, enacted by *Protestants* against *Papists* or other *dissenters from the Established Church*, is, really, both in *spirit and principle*, a popish “act of faith,” whether the offender be immediately consumed by fire and faggot, or subjected by modern refinement, to milder but more enduring sufferings? And while such execrable laws are permitted to disgrace the statute-book, and dishonour the Protestant religion, are they not, in truth, so many “acts of faith” kept in a state of unceasing and permanent operation?

But the new Association above-mentioned—will it not introduce a more humane system, and divest ascendancy of its most frightful features? It styles itself “The Benevolent and Religious Orange Institution.” “Benevolent!”—good; “Religious!”—good again; “Orange”—that is “benevolent” to themselves, and “religious” in persecuting papists! Read any of their speeches and you will be convinced that *their* cup of benevolence overflows with the waters of bitterness. Nor is this bitterness extended only to the poor Roman Catholics; the choicest draught is reserved

for the “liberal Protestants,” especially that “political apostate” Mr. Brownlow. But his apostacy was not the most criminal feature of his conduct. If his desertion could have been imputed to any splendid temptation of office or emolument, it would not have stung so deeply. It might be lamented, but it would be tolerated and excused, as occurring in the ordinary course of that political traffic so well understood in Ireland. But as no human ingenuity could trace it to an interested motive, it could be considered as only the result of an honest conviction of the cruelty and injustice of the cause he had hitherto supported. It was quite evident, that what was branded as apostacy was regarded by the apostate, as a glorious escape from the camp of dishonour. This was an “unkind cut.” He found the recesses of the cave filled with plunder; he discovered traces of blood on its floor, and fled from the dark abode of guilt, and the communion of the banditti! Flesh and blood could not endure this. What! dare to open his eyes upon the moral and physical waste about him—a nation oppressed, maligned, insulted, demoralized, bewailing her lost rights, and steeped to the chin in poverty! But why should the disciple of ascendancy forget the lessons of his youth; why should the “*benevolent*” Orangeman cast a glance of human kindness beyond the threshold of his own house; why should the “*religious*” Orangeman feel for the disabilities,

the consequent degradation, and wretchedness of “Popish Idolators;” why should the “*benevolent and religious*” exclusionist cast his constitutional pearls to swine; why not rather slaughter the grunting herd as a sacrifice to the Deity, and deposit the pearls on his altar, as an acceptable offering? But the sagacity of Brownlow having discovered that the “*benevolence*” of the exclusionist was cant, and his “*religion*” a cloak; that the system of selfishness, injustice, privation, calumny, and hypocrisy, had, after a full and fair trial, totally failed to feed and tranquilize a people, whose only crime had been “undivided allegiance” to their legitimate sovereign, and an inflexible adherence to the worship of their God,—crimes, perhaps, venial in their nature, and long since atoned for,—thought it high time to explode the inhuman and persecuting policy, and substitute for it the Christian system of charity and good will towards *all* men. On this principle he acted, and for this he risked, and suffered much. But his reward, even here below, is great—a generous elevation of mind, an applauding conscience, and the vituperation of those whose eulogy would be disgrace. Yet let him not claim an exclusive right to his family name. This the public will not permit: for every man, who, in opposition to his prejudices, shall, hereafter, on great occasions, act a noble, honourable, and

truly disinterested part, on the theatre of life, shall be styled *another BROWNLOW*, by all who admire what is really great, and good, in the human character.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Protestant Constitution.—Persecution inseparable from Toleration.*

PROTESTANT Ascendancy, as we have seen, and as too many have felt, is a sad reality ; but “ Protestant Constitution” is a creature of the brain, invented for its support. Let us, however, for a moment, suppose it to be real. Some members of our corporations, not excepting a few of our aldermen, (I do not glance at the Guild of Merchants,) are persuaded, it is said, that our Constitution was either imported from Holland, by the Prince of Orange, or beaten out, at a single heat, on the royal anvil, after his accession to the throne. It is not surprising that the honest gentlemen, who hold this opinion, should be persuaded of the Protestantcy of our Constitution ; nor more surprising that these, who know better, should take no pains to undeceive them, by detecting a useful error.—History, however, is, unfortunately, silent on this point, and even affirms most disloyally, that not

only King, Lords, and Commons, but the important maxims which uphold and limit prerogative and privilege, and the constitutional laws, which protect the life of the subject from the frown of arbitrary power, and his life, liberty, and fortune, from the caprice or venality of judges, had actually existed in the “olden times” of popish superstition. What a mortifying thought! It also affirms, that the last-mentioned objects were still better secured by a law passed in the reign of Charles II., which protected the subject from the horrors of indefinite imprisonment; and Blackstone (whose “loyalty” seems here to be somewhat suspicious) tells us that this *habeas corpus* act gave to our Constitution its ultimate perfection. So that unless history and Judge Blackstone be both mistaken, or engaged in a wicked conspiracy against the Guild of Merchants, Colonel Verner, and the loyal Orangemen of the North, who meet to drown their disappointments in wine and wassail, or for other purposes still more vigorous—the frame of our Constitution was brought *nearly* to perfection, by popish artificers, before the Reformation began; and *fully* attained it long before King William landed at Torbay. After his arrival, the measures adopted had in view, and that *professedly*, not a change in the Constitution, but its preservation from the inroads of arbitrary power. The settlement of the Crown by a departure from the law of primogeniture—an essential

part of the Constitution—was surely not an improvement, but a temporary violation of that Constitution, which nothing but the imperious necessity of the case could justify. With great deference, therefore, to the Orange and Purple Brotherhood, I contend that the Revolution of 1688 established no new principle, but, after a temporary infringement, left the Constitution as it found it. The appointment of a Protestant King was a prudent *legislative* enactment growing out of *accidental* circumstances. Nor is it true, as asserted by “loyal Orangemen,” in moments of irritation, when their official perquisites are threatened,—that the right of the subject to dethrone the monarch for misgovernment, was established by the Revolution. This is a gross mistake ; no constitution can sanction a principle which involves its own subversion, without being able to provide for its re-establishment. The principle is founded on the law of self-preservation—a law antecedent to the Constitution, which protected men in the state of nature, and followed them into society, but which can never sanction insurrection till men’s lives, and whatever tends to protect and sustain these lives, are in the most imminent danger.

But admitting that a few acts of parliament, enacted by Protestants, made some slight change in the Constitution, while it left the general fabric untouched, surely this would not prove that the

Constitution became Protestant. The most you can do, is to denominate those slight changes Protestant; but even this would be an admission that the rest of the fabric is Catholic. Do I then contend that our Constitution is Popish. No; I contend that it is not popish, that it never was popish, that it is not now, never was, and never will be either Protestant, or Popish. The latter, as we have seen, has the fairer claim; but the two ideas are really incoherent. It is as correct to say that a Constitution is white or black, as that it is Catholic or Protestant. The objects of a constitution are present and temporal; of a religion, future and spiritual interests. The one was *given to man* by his Maker; the other was framed *for man* by himself. The former is a form of government; the latter a system of faith and practice. The former endeavours to protect the liberty, reputation, and fortune of the individual; the latter assures the individual, on divine authority, that true wealth, unfading reputation, and real freedom, are not to be found here below, and that human constitution can neither give or take them away. The British Constitution may be adopted in any civilized country—in Spain, Russia, or China—without any change in the religion of either. In this case, would the same form of government be Protestant in England, Catholic in Spain, Greek in Russia, and Pagan in China? If our Constitution became Protestant at the Revolution, was it

Popish in the reign of the Protestant Elizabeth, as well as in those of the Catholic Edwards and Henrys? To establish Protestantism by law, or make it the religion of the State, (a vile phrase,) does not make the Constitution Protestant. The legislature might establish a system of medicine, or astronomy, as well as a system of religion. Let us suppose it to have established the Copernican system, endowed its professors, and enacted that no man could be a member of the legislature without declaring, on oath, that the earth was a planet, the sun at rest, and the king head of the astronomers ;—would we then have a Copernican Constitution? On the same principle we might have a Neptunian, or Volcanian, a phlogistic, or antiphlogistic Constitution !

They, who talk of a Protestant Constitution, pay but a poor compliment to our religion, or form of government. If *our* Constitution be Protestant, so is that of Prussia, Hesse Cassel, &c. ; thus this ominous phrase would reduce to the same level our venerated form of government, and the military despotisms of these ill-fated countries. All would be equally Protestant Constitutions! If Protestantism means pure Christianity, and Constitution a human contrivance for effecting temporal purposes, what an ill-sorted combination of terms is “Protestant Constitution.” It represents religion, allured by glittering vani-

ties, withdrawing its eye from heaven and fixing it on earth. It degrades Protestantism by employing it in the service of ambition, avarice, monopoly, and worldliness in general. In Ireland, the phrase "Protestant Constitution" is employed as a talisman to justify domination, insult, and political exclusion ; to sanction a proud, vindictive, and overbearing spirit, which neither the festivities of the board, the exhortations of the statesman, the authority of the monarch, or the precepts of the Gospel can soften. So that we are, at last, *driven* to ask, what is this Protestantism of Orangemen ?—is it Christianity, or does it partake of its spirit ? An appeal to the Gospel would decide the question. There it would be found that the Author of Christianity, though Lord of all, came in the form of a servant ; disclaimed all human power and authority ; declared that his kingdom was not of this world ; and, in the plenitude of his love for a fallen race, submitted to an ignominious death, praying for his persecutors in the midst of his torments. There it will be found that *meekness, humility, self-denial*, and *the love of his species*, are the graces most earnestly inculcated, the virtues most eminently characteristic of the *Christian*,—and that *revenge, pride, calumny, contention, and wrath*, are the vices most frequently, and awfully, condemned. In the Gospel will be found no *proud pretensions*,—no claims of *exclusive privileges*, or *temporal ascen-*

*dency, founded on spiritual merit,—no arrogant assumption of superiority,—no insolent imputation of inferiority.* On the contrary, we find Heathen masters obeyed by Christian servants, Heathen sovereigns by Christian subjects, malignant passions condemned, selfish propensities rebuked, benevolent affections applauded, injuries and violence not repelled by force, but disarmed by kindness!

Such is the spirit of Christianity ; but is it the spirit of the Orangeman, even while the words “pure and apostolic Church,” “holy religion,” and “Protestant Constitution,” issue from his lips ? Let his conscience answer the question ; but not amidst the festivities of the table, or the cruel and unnecessary commemorations of victory ; but when his pride is humbled, if not subdued, by the pressure of disease, the stroke of misfortune, or the detection of guilt. What a weak, deluded being is man ! Religion, which undertakes to conduct him through the paths of peace, to the abode of future bliss, he employs as an instrument of discord and the means of attaining that superiority over his fellow-creatures, which *nature gave him not, and God forbade him to claim !* The term “Protestant Ascendency” (*whatever may be pretended*) assumes that the professors of one form of Christianity are the favourites of God ; those of another his enemies ; and that the former are divinely commissioned to engross to them-

selves the good things of this life, and to make its hardships, privations, and poverty, the portion of the latter. It savours of the Koran, and not of the Gospel; and justifies its violation of the precepts of Christ, by a pretended zeal for his religion. While it aspires to greater heights, it is rooted more deeply than the tree described by the poet—

————— quantum vertice ad auras  
Ætherias, tantum radice in tartara tendit.

Ascendency, in its warfare against equal laws and equal rights, deems all stratagems justifiable, and even meritorious. Facts are suppressed, misstated, or exaggerated, and words divested of their natural and ordinary meaning. Talk of the *religion* of Zoroaster, Numa, or Mohammed, and nobody charges you with impropriety in the use of the word; but talk of the Roman Catholic religion, and you are told, on high ecclesiastical authority, that papists have “no religion”—that Protestants cannot “concede the attribute of Christianity in its vital character and proper sense” to the system of popery: and this assertion is founded on two facts, one partly false, partly exaggerated, and partly misstated, namely, that popery “forbids the use of the Scriptures;” the other—that “it subjects the Word of God to the authority of man,” which fact, if it be different from the former, can only mean—that the Church

of Rome claims the right of interpreting the Scripture for each individual, and that it is the duty of the latter to receive that interpretation.— In urging this claim that Church is not singular the Church of England and Ireland, as has been already proved, claims the same right, and has asserted it, for ages, by the most rigorous persecution, which still continues, though in a milder form, while many of our Clergy are exerting all their influence to make it perpetual. This is a truth which no sophistry can shake. It is a great and prevailing mistake, among those who talk much and think little, that when Catholics, or other dissenters from the Established Church, are permitted to assemble for the purpose of worshipping God, in their own way, while their chapels or meeting-houses are protected from intrusion or violence, and their persons from injury or insult, by the law of the land,—when, in a word, they enjoy the benefit of a full and free toleration,— that then, with respect to them, persecution is at an end. Than this nothing can be more fallacious.

Wherever there is toleration, there *must* be persecution. The former is the curb which checks the career of the latter and the speed of his blood-hounds, when they became too impetuous for the taste of the Nimrods from whose stables and kennels they issue. While persecution raged uncontrolled, the faggot blazed, the gibbet groaned,

and the victim of conscience was hewn into quarters ; or his doom was a dungeon for life, or confiscation of goods and perpetual banishment.— When those infernal atrocities were frowned down, by the growing humanity of the times, toleration was reluctantly called in, by the friends of persecution, and took under her protection the lives and fortunes of unfashionable worshipers, which, in an enlightened age, could no longer be sacrificed without infamy. But persecution, far from being destroyed, much less suspended, by the influence of her new associate, was merely divested of the more disgusting features of her character. She was deprived of her machinery of deportation and death ;—her dungeons were sealed, her ships consigned to the fair trader, her faggots to the baker, and her “fatal tree” was no longer employed in raising martyrs to the skies, but in suspending *temporal* malefactors.— But she was still left an ample field wherein to expatriate ; and the number of her victims was multiplied in proportion as the rigour of her inflictions was diminished. The number of these *humane* inflictions, also, was gradually reduced ; but some of the most insulting and galling still remain, which divide the people of Ireland into two great castes—the one dominant, and consequently overbearing, the other degraded, and, of course, deeply and justly discontented.

This discontent is inflamed by repeated disap-

pointment, and daily augmented by the rapid growth of intellectual culture among the Irish Catholics. Such are the effects of toleration and persecution united. They conspire to make the degraded cast poor, but sensitive,—miserable, but intelligent. “ You may (says Toleration) go to your Mass, stare at your priest, and be edified by his Latin.” “ With all my heart, (says Persecution,) but I will take care that no Mass-man shall come into confidential contact with a Protestant Government.” “ If (says Toleration) you are blockhead enough to believe that a crum of bread is God Almighty, believe on still, and please your fancy.” “ You are heartily welcome to your crumb, (says Persecution,) but I shall take care to exclude men of your taste from the rich fare of Irish corporators.” “ Go, (says Toleration,) for I am ever ready to relieve ‘tender consciences,’ go, and address your prayers by dozens to your blessed Madona, as long and often as you please.” “ I second that motion, (says Persecution,) but insist that the servile worshippers of the Virgin are unfit for the company of gentlemen within the walls of Saint Stephen.” “ You may (says the former) learn to read and write.” “ Certainly, (says the latter,) but you must not brandish your quill, or your tongue, in a government office, or for a Protestant board.” “ You may, (says Toleration,) become a barrister at law.” “ Yes, (says Persecution,) you may eat your way to the bar—an undertaking for which you

seem well qualified ; but no popish reptile must aspire to cast, at any season, his slough of linsey-woolsey, and writh himself into glossy silk, or official station. In short, I highly approve of the indulgence which my friend Toleration extends to you papists : were I to dragoon you all into Protestantism, I should lose the spiritual delight which I derive from making you hewers of wood and drawers of water."

In Ireland, whoever should assert that Roman Catholics are persecuted, would be stared at by the high Church Clergy, and immediately told, perhaps in polite language, that he is " quite " misinformed ; that, on the *contrary*, they enjoy " a full and free toleration—a pregnant proof " of that charity and loving-kindness which has " always distinguished our pure and apostolic " Church." Yet it is certain that toleration cannot exist in the absence of persecution. The former, indeed, is persecution divested of its more formidable powers of speedy destruction. We say, that Roman Catholic and Protestant dissenters are tolerated in England, because, with respect to them, *persecution has abated, but not ceased.* But we never say that Church Protestants are tolerated ; because, where there is no persecution, there is no room for toleration. Cut off the lion's claws, and draw his teeth, and the horse, in the next field, is no longer in danger of

being devoured or torn in pieces; but he might and still would be persecuted by being disturbed, annoyed, harassed, injured, and driven from his pastures. All this, one would suppose, is sufficiently clear and certain. Yet, in Ireland, how often do we hear it said, even by educated men, and especially Bible Society divines—“I thank my God I am not the advocate of persecution; *on the contrary*, I am a decided friend to toleration; this the papists enjoy to its fullest extent; why, then, are they discontented?” This absurdity is current in every company of exclusionists. Party spirit confounds sense and nonsense, and even wrests words from their true meaning to serve its purposes.

Jampridem, equidem, vera vocabula rerum amisimus.

In the present age, it would be an insult to moral science, good feeling, and even common sense, to support, by any formal proof, the proposition—that every man has an undoubted right to entertain such religious opinions as he believes to be true, and worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Yet this is the principle to which toleration and persecution are both opposed. The latter disapproves of dissent from established doctrines or forms, and would exterminate at once. Toleration equally disapproves of dissent; but finding that the exterminating process had failed, and being, also,

in some degree, influenced by shame, renounces, with affected horror, proscription and bloodshed, and, with professed compassion, but real inhumanity and contempt of the first principles of justice, substitutes a vexatious, harassing, degrading, and disqualifying system, which it puts into permanent and oppressive operation by the instrumentality of Persecution, who takes care to see laws, issuing from so religious a source, duly executed. Oh ! but the Church of Ireland is not a persecuting Church :—it does not war, with conscience, unto death and confiscation. According to this argument, though decapitation of a dissenter be persecution, yet the amputation of a finger-joint is only the infliction of a wholesome disability. The latter, however, is as much persecution, in principle, though not in degree, as the former, because, in both cases, a right is equally infringed. This applies equally to property. If confiscation be persecution, every minor invasion of property, or the means of acquiring it, is persecution. When any right whatever is infringed, because the party worships his God according to the dictates of his conscience, and not of the State, such infringement is persecution. It is time that men should no longer impose on themselves by mere words. Many, who talk with approbation of toleration, seem to detest persecution. Yet where the former is, there the latter *must* be also. Banish therefore both, substitute equal

laws, and equal rights, and declare all religious professions equally entitled to the benefit of the great, comprehensive, and immutable principles of justice.

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## CHAPTER IX.

*Forty Shilling Freeholders.—Wonderful Unanimity among Irish Catholics: and why.—Concession the Dictate of sound Policy.*

MANY events, which have lately occurred in Ireland, are an excellent comment on “Protestant Ascendancy,” and “Protestant Constitution;” and strikingly exhibit the effects resulting from toleration combined with persecution. Take a single instance. Among our ascendancy gentlemen it passed as an undisputed axiom, that a forty-shilling freeholder ought to have no will of his own, no sense of the obligation of an oath, no rebellious scruples of conscience; that he had no rights, but in their place, a multiplicity of duties, most of which were included in the cardinal one of passive obedience to his landlord. Of course it was reasonably expected that he would always follow “the master,” with the docility of a spaniel, to the hustings; vote and swear as directed; and afterwards out-bluster, overawe, and batter his

opponents. This was quite in the spirit of "Protestant Constitution," but not altogether in the spirit of that British Constitution portrayed by Blackstone, and Delome, and eulogized by Chatham, Burke, and Montesquieu. Conformably however to the spirit of the latter, and in wicked violation of that of the former, the Catholic forty-shilling freeholders, true to their oaths, their conscience, and the common cause, maugre all the pathetic remonstrances of their kind and indulgent landlords, dared at the late contested elections, to distinguish friends from foes, by returning the former, and rejecting the latter. Immediately a tremendous outcry was raised that the "Protestant Constitution" was trampled down by the swinish multitude; and the defeated partisans of ascendancy retreated, in wild disorder, to the fastnesses of the north, and there rallied only to relieve the most gnawing sensations, by eating and drinking with determined thirst, and desperate voracity.

But the spirit of revenge attempted, in vain, to sweeten the cup which disappointment had imbibited. The Catholic Clergy were assailed with unmeasured obloquy. What! that popish priests should dare to usurp the privileges of the Established Clergy by mingling in temporal affairs, and attempting to influence the fate of elections for Protestant representatives! No-

thing, however, is more certain than that the mighty impulse was communicated to the whole mass of mind, not by the priests, but by the educated classes of the Catholic laity. The priests were only the organs—the efficient organs—of this great body. From the latter emanated the project of the Catholic Rent, the spirit that pays it, the discomfiture of Orange Candidates, and the countless parochial meetings, respectfully but firmly petitioning for emancipation. Obedient to this impulse, the poor forty-shilling freeholder, with uncalculating magnanimity, cast himself and his *ALL* into the scale of his country, at the contested elections. For this he is hunted down and vilified. Yet, in those days of glory, when Greece and Rome were free, a similar act of self-devotion in such a cause, would be sung by the poet, celebrated by the orator, and recorded by the historian; it would glow in the pages of Thucydides and Livy, sparkle in the Pharsalia, and be read with tearful rapture in the *Aeneid*.

But whence that unanimity, whence that deep sense of the importance of emancipation which pervade the whole Catholic population? From the combined operations of toleration and persecution. The latter, by penal enactments, had nearly extinguished letters, and annihilated property.—The former, in process of time, restored the capacity of acquiring both; and the powers of reading

and reflection, once acquired, were naturally directed to the perusal of those records of ingenious oppression, and inhuman inflictions, with which the Catholics of Ireland were visited, because they had dared to be loyal to their legitimate sovereign, and the God of their fathers. They conceived that the punishment was far too heavy for the crime ; and that the latter, however *atrocious*, had been sufficiently atoned for by ages of patient suffering and *acknowledged* exertion in the service of the State. When *Protestants* fought for a *popish* pretender to the throne, the *Papists* were, *at least*, passive. When an English admiral fled before the combined fleet of France and Spain, the Catholics of Ireland lined the shore of the south, and their union with the Protestants astonished and disconcerted the hostile armament. They lent themselves to the measure of an incorporate union, and still lament the violation of engagements, substantially, if not formally contracted. In her struggle for existence, with republican and imperial France, they supported England with a lavish expenditure of blood and treasure. On various occasions their loyalty has been acknowledged by ministers, and recorded in votes of thanks on parliamentary journals : yet all has failed to procure the confidence of the State ! Reading and inquiry had convinced them that the season of national distress had generally been the period of concession ; and that the disunion of the

Catholic leaders, and apparent apathy of the peasantry, had always furnished the friends of exclusion with their most specious objections. Hence every effort was made to dry up these two sources of argument:—the speaker harangued, the press toiled, and, in every district, the newly acquired powers of those who had learned to read, were placed in a state of requisition, for the benefit of their illiterate neighbours. Discussion became universal; grievances the subject; and, at last, all Catholic Ireland presents to the astonished spectator, one vast scene of angry complaint, irritated feeling, respectful petition, and determined obedience to the law under every species of provocation to violence and riot! A new and surprising lesson is read to the Irish peasant, and not read in vain. A stately demeanour, a “proud submission,” and an inflexible adherence to the great principles of public duty and social order, is every where inculcated, and generally adopted. To break the peace, to desert one’s post when his country calls, are beginning to be regarded by the peasantry as violations, at once, of the point of honour, and the dictates of conscience, as well as serious obstacles to that emancipation for the attainment of which every heart is panting.

The influence of the educated classes was mightily promoted by the injudicious operations of the Kildare-street, London Hibernian, Bible

Society, and other proselyting Associations. Their vaunting apostles were regarded as daring intruders into the Catholic vineyard. Their pious but insulting pomp of language and demeanour, and the impatient zeal of their missionaries, agents, and orators, carrying their spiritual warfare into the remotest provinces, produced a vigorous reaction among the Catholic Clergy and gentry.—They felt themselves treated as Heathens and outcasts from God, and affirmed that the vociferating missionaries of fanaticism were endeavouring to ensnare their souls, as penal statutes, profligate magistrates, the selfishness of an unfeeling ascendancy, and the partial administration of justice, had enslaved their bodies. That ardour which the people had begun to evince in the pursuit of their political rights, was sublimed, to enthusiasm, by religious considerations; the cause of God, and that of their country, became inseparably associated in their minds; and the former imparted a sacred character to all their efforts in behalf of the latter. The effrontery with which the charge of intended proselytism was sometimes denied; the disingenuous sophistry by which it was often eluded, and the contented impudence with which it was afterwards avowed, disgusted candid Protestants, and inflamed the passions of the Catholic populace. Some landed proprietors of weak heads, and stubborn faith, ambitious of proselyting renown, and not content with *recom-*

*mending* the Kildare system of education, proceeded to enforce it by intimidation and village tyranny. The tenantry were ordered to send their children to the London Hibernian, or Kildare-street schools, where the Bible is read without note or comment, and the principle recognised—that “the right of reading involves the right of interpreting.” The parent demurred, the priest remonstrated, the landlord was obstinate, and the tenant was crushed. Men’s patience was exhausted. Catholic lawyers laid down their briefs, and encountered, in public meetings, the ablest adepts in controversial subtlety. Catholic priests met, in public debate, the irrefragable doctors of private judgment: and, from the respective presses, issued pamphlet after pamphlet, full of angry, bilious, and turbid matter, utterly destitute of the spirit, but abounding in the profession of charity. Syllogism, instruction, and sophism, encountered sophism, induction, and syllogism; while each party was more successful in disproving the statements, and refuting the arguments of his adversary, than in establishing his own. All terminates at last in a drawn battle; and the exhausted combatants, each astonished at the blind obstinacy of his antagonist, retire from the field, to make room for new aspirants to the glory of theological pugnacity.— During the heat of the conflict, the Protestant contends that the Popish Doctor must be an enemy to the Bible, because he will allow nobody but

the Church to expound it. The latter insists that, for this very reason, he is a real friend of the Bible, because he preserves it from the misinterpretation of those who are wise in their own conceit, and who, like Satan, would quote the Word of God, not to save souls, but to destroy them.

Thus pressed, on all sides, by misjudging piety, uncalculating fanaticism, visitation charges, unmeasured abuse, and foulest imputations, in addition to the causes of discontent which had already existed, the whole Catholic mind has been condensed into one united mass of determined but constitutional resistance! The advice and exhortations of the Catholic lawyer, country-gentleman, respectable farmer, and priest, are imbibed with greedy ears, by an impoverished, oppressed, insulted, and inquiring peasantry, sensible of its wrongs, and devoted to its religion. Every parish, every townland, every hovel, is the scene of animated discussion; the national intellect, which had slumbered for ages, is roused at last; and its sudden development, rapid progression, and wholesome direction, far outstrip the most sanguine hopes of friends, and apprehensive forebodings of enemies. This state of things, according to the exclusionists, indicates concerted projects of insurrection. This seems to be a gross, and I fear, in two many instances, a wilful mistake. The imputation is refuted by circumstan-

tial evidence, of the most decisive nature, both negative and positive. Where are the secret associations, the nocturnal meetings, the sworn fraternities, the dark catechisms of insurrection? Are they not loudly and successfully reprobated? It is the pride of Irish Catholics that their proceedings are as undisguised, as their claims are honourable. The utmost publicity is courted. Meetings held in the face of day, and in places of general resort,—doors unclosed,—books and papers open for the inspection of the curious and suspicious,—principles avowed, and speeches made, which the keenest retainers of ascendancy are invited to hear, and not forbidden to hiss,—a deportment frank, manly, and confident in the justice of its cause,—occasional bursts of irritated feeling, which sometimes forgets that respect which is due to an honourable and powerful opponent,—these, surely, are not the symptoms of dark conspiracy, and meditated insurrection. But such a state of things is, surely, not desirable. It will, indeed, while hope is kept alive, strongly tend to preserve the public peace. But should the cup of hope be rudely overturned, and the season of danger arrive, it would, perhaps, be too much to expect that a nation, however legally and constitutionally organized, which had repeatedly rapped at the door of justice, and been as often repulsed, might not, in the soreness of disappointment, avail itself of the public calamities, and

renounce that loyalty which is now its actuating principle.

The evils under which Ireland is suffering, are numerous, complicated, of long standing ; and the remedies are neither easily found, or easily applied. Judicious legislative enactments might reach some of those evils ; more enlarged views of their real interests, on the part of the landed proprietors, and patient perseverance in a lenient and impartial policy, on the part of the local Government, would, doubtless, in process of time, effect much. But there is one measure, without which, as an indispensable preliminary, all others must be ineffectual ; and that is **REAL** Catholic Emancipation. They who talk of securities know little of human nature, at least, as modified in Ireland. Every security which human wisdom could devise would operate as a real and substantial *insecurity*. It would be a recorded declaration of the king, and both houses of parliament, that Roman Catholics could not be much relied on, that they must be regarded with some distrust, and treated with guarded caution. This would be a standing and permanent insult to Irish feeling, which is ever as ready to resent an affront, as to be grateful for a favour. It would be like the giving to a distressed man a draft on your banker with one hand, and knocking him down with the other ; but, with this important difference,

that the blow, being a mere transitory act, might soon be forgotten ; while the security would be a permanent and interminable offence, operating every successive day and year, and affording a never-failing subject of complaint to every discontented or turbulent character. That such would be the natural effect of what are miscalled securities, will scarcely be denied. On the other hand, the Irish character is now so well known as to make it almost unnecessary to say that gratitude—ardent gratitude for benefits received, or confidence reposed—is one of its most prominent features. Then why rely on offensive securities couched in words, and more perishable than the paper on which they might be printed, rather than on the voluntary homage of Irish hearts, glowing with enthusiastic gratitude for the restitution of rights long lost, and deeply lamented ;—rights withdrawn by the jealousy of legislators long mouldering in the dust, but restored by the generosity of contemporary statesmen,—the living and visible objects of Catholic affection and veneration ? A boon accompanied with insulting restrictions, is a monster in polities. While it attempts to sooth, it is sure to irritate ; as an insult seldom fails to make a deeper impression than a compliment, an injury than a benefit. A wise lawgiver will adapt his views to man's nature, instead of forcing that nature into a conformity with his purposes. It is quite natural, and reasonable, that

the Protestants of the empire should look for securities ; but let them reject nominal, and adopt substantial securities, resting on the firm basis of Catholic self-interest, and Catholic confidence, on the conviction of Catholics that they are fairly and honourably treated, no longer suspected, no longer in a state of creeping subserviency, and mortifying degradation. Such securities, and such alone, would, in the opinion of the writer of these pages, be effectual ; he knows his countrymen long and well, has studied their dispositions, observed their proceedings, and, in truth, is not an interested witness. Emancipation, unclogged with suspicion or distrust, would be hailed with joy by applauding millions, and lay the solid foundations of national tranquillity, and progressive improvement. A concordat between his Majesty and the court of Rome, to which, doubtless, the latter would readily accede, on reasonable terms, might regulate, if necessary, the exercise of the papal authority. This measure would satisfy every candid Protestant, without offending the Catholic. But securities clogging emancipation, and created by parliamentary enactment, would give offence ; and therefore it might be deemed virtue to violate or elude them, for any object of real, or supposed importance. For such attempts there are in Ireland sufficient skill, activity, and enterprise. Why, then, create a temptation to dark intrigue, and criminal activity ? The principles

of loyalty are, I am fully persuaded, deeply wrought into the constitutions of Irish Catholics ; but these principles ought to be promoted, and not discouraged ; fostered, and not smothered. Insult and distrust would give an artificial importance to the restraint imposed, a factitious value to the thing withheld, and this value might operate as a premium to disaffection. Then give them unconditional emancipation, and you secure their affections ; you consolidate the union of the two countries ; you appeal to Catholic honour, and Irish generosity,—an appeal to which every heart and hand will respond in the hour of your difficulties and danger.

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### CONCLUSION.

THE foregoing brief observations are intended as an appeal—though, it is feared, but a feeble appeal—to the good feeling of the English nation, their views of sound policy, but, *above all, to their sense of moral and religious obligation.* Surely, it will not be, openly, contended, that the rules of honesty, justice, forbearance, and humanity, bind us only in our dealings with individuals ; and are not to operate in regulating our treatment of large masses of our fellow-creatures. This con-

sideration deserves the attention of all Christians who are persuaded that the circulation of the Bible does not atone for the violation of its precepts. For my own part, I feel that my offences against God are many and grievous: for them I am accountable; but let me not be answerable, in the whole or in part, for the offences of millions of my countrymen, in whose breasts my selfishness or injustice, in opposing their rightful claims, must excite the malignant passions of anger, revenge, malice, or desperation. For any share in the production of such horrible feelings, let me never be called to an account, nor for the selfishness and injustice which could provoke them. Are we commanded by Scripture to deal out justice by retail, and traffic in injustice by wholesale? Or, shall the pride and presumption of private judgment, which has almost extinguished Christianity in Protestant Germany, be permitted to reason away, by indirect means, or tacitly explode the morality of the Gospel in England and Ireland? Strange! that a divine code, professing to regulate the **PRACTICE**, as well as the belief of human beings, should never be openly appealed to by *Protestants* in the discussion of a question so interesting to a great majority of the Irish nation. But, if the precepts of that code be considered, by the politician, as either above or beneath his notice, where are the eloquent advocates of biblical circulation, the enlightened champions of

“private judgment,” the “benevolent and religious” exclusionists? are they also turned politicians? or if not, why,—when a question is agitated which involves the rights of their Christian neighbours, and, consequently, their property, character, security, and peace of mind,—why do they not find arguments or scriptural texts against the existence of such rights, and against an acquiescence in the claims founded upon them? Is it not because they feel that the morality of the Gospel is awfully at variance with that of “Protestant Ascendency?” But, surely, such discordance might be removed by the intrepidity of private judgment, operating on stubborn texts with ingenious subtlety, under the influence of that *beau ideal* of perfection—a “Protestant Constitution.” Is the private judgment of our Bible Society Doctors less able and daring than that of their German brethren? But, may a merciful Providence protect these countries from the further progress of that pernicious principle, which has deluged the cradle of the Reformation with the most shocking impiety and rank infidelity. Read, ye advocates of unqualified private judgment, read the able and painfully interesting publication\* of the Rev. Mr. Rose, read the statement

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\* The State of the Protestant Religion in Germany; in a series of Discourses, preached before the University of Cambridge, by the Rev. H. J. Rose, M. A. of Trinity College, and Vicar of Horsham, Sussex.

of facts—of awful facts which it details, and the cause which produced them; then, say whether you have or have not any misgivings of conscience. It may surely be admitted, as an axiom, that the doctrines of Christianity, as embraced by the primitive Christians, were, at least, as pure as they have been at any subsequent period, or *can be*, to the end of the world. On this axiom the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, on the Continent, as well as the Church of England, have acted. They laboured, *professedly*, to restore Christianity to its *original* purity. They appealed to the belief of the primitive ages, as the best, or only admissible comment on the doctrinal parts of Scripture. The Roman Catholic Church joined in the appeal: and thus, all these Churches, though differing considerably on minor points, agreed in maintaining the great essentials of Christianity, because they drew from the same source—the Word of God as understood by the first Christians. Confessions of faith, resting on this foundation, were drawn up by the English and foreign Reformers, to which was required the subscription of every candidate for the ministry. But in process of time “a device,” as Mr. Rose informs us, “has been adopted in Germany, “for escaping from the restrictive powers of these “Articles of Faith; and ever since that period “they have been subscribed with this qualification “—as far as they agree with Scripture; a qualifi-

“ cation which obviously bestows, on the ministry,  
“ the most perfect liberty of believing and teach-  
“ ing whatever their own fancy may suggest.”  
Thus, the confessions of faith were despised ; the  
authority of the primitive Christians thrown over  
board ; and private judgment became the arbiter  
and dispenser of scriptural truth. A short extract  
from Mr. Rose’s book, in the Appendix to these  
pages, will convey some faint idea of the dread-  
ful result.

## APPENDIX.

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### NO. I.

MR. ROSE tells us, that, from his review of the state of Protestantism in Germany, “a stronger, and perhaps more important lesson is offered on that subject, which is *said to form the base, and the boast of Protestantism*—the right of private judgment. I speak not, of course, of the legal, or even of the moral right; but of the right as possessed by the members, and especially the ministers of any Church. The Church of England, in her Articles, expressly assumes the exercise of an authority entirely at variance with it; the practice, at least, of every body, even of dissenters, is at variance with it also; and the terrible evils resulting in the German Church from its exercise, are the strongest practical proof of the wisdom and necessity of restraining it.” Of these “terrible evils” take a few instances. Among the German divines it is a favourite doctrine, “that it is impossible there could have been a miracle; and the words of Scripture were examined and forced into any meaning but their own.” “By some, the (miracles) were said to be that mythology which must attend every religion to gain the attention of the multitude; by some, the common and well-known ribaldry of the infidel was unsparingly used; by one or more, *high in station in the Church*, some artifice, and probably magnetism, has been, even within the last ten years, suggested.” We are also told that very many divines affirm—“that there is nothing in the Old Testament clear enough to argue from without fear of arbi-

trary conclusions." Others "went so far as to attack the whole body of the prophets, as imposters, in the most out-rageous and revolting terms." But my limits do not admit of protracted quotation. Suffice it to say, that the inspiration of the Scriptures is denied, except in a sense which would make the moral precepts of Cicero or Seneca a revelation: and we are assured that "*this doctrine was taught by divines from the pulpit, by professors from the chairs of theology* ;" "it was addressed to the old, to free them from *ancient prejudices* ; and to the young, as the knowledge which could "make them *truly wise*," &c. &c. Surely, then, it is scarcely necessary to say, with Mr. Rose, "that the Protestant Church "of Germany is the mere shadow of a name." But he also tells us, that "*this abdication of Christianity* was not confined to either the Lutheran, or Calvinistic profession, but "extended its baneful, and withering influence, *with equal force, over each*." From Mr. Rose we also collect, that of the few who retain any sense of religion, some became pietists, and resigned themselves to all the highest flights of enthusiastic fancy; while "some sought, in the bosom of a "Church, (the Roman Catholic,) which, in the midst of all "its dreadful corruptions,\* at least possessed the form, and retained the *leading doctrines* of the true Church, *the peace* "which they sought, in vain, amidst the *endless variations* of "the Protestant Churches of Germany, and their *gradual renunciation of every doctrine of Christianity*."

On this afflicting statement of *facts* I make no remark.—But let it be observed, that the "*gradual renunciation*" above-mentioned, has certainly not been retarded in its progress, if not promoted, by the proceedings and influence of the British and Foreign Bible Society. On the first appearance of this

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\* Mr. Rose dedicates his Book, in very flattering terms, to the Bishop of Chester.

Association, its professed object, and *great principle*, were hailed with rapture in Protestant Germany. The divines of that country were not slow in holding out the right hand of fellowship to their English brethren of the new Association.—Born, ranging themselves under the banners of unqualified *private judgment*, immediately commenced a spiritual warfare against “*superstition and idolatry*.” Though Germany was then better supplied with copies of the Word of God than, perhaps, any other country, yet Bible Societies started up, as if by enchantment, in the villages and towns, and received, with a transport scarcely spiritual, large pecuniary remittances from the zeal and opulence of their English associates. Thus, copious streams of wealth, issuing from the vanity, ostentation, piety, or fanaticism, of the parent Society, irrigated and refreshed the thirsty sands of Westphalia and Brandenburg, depositing, in their course, Bibles and Testaments without number, note, or comment, together with animated exhortations to the vigorous exercise of unqualified private judgment. The Germans extolled the English as the great revivers and *generous* patrons of religious truth; and the latter repaid the flattering compliment with fresh remittances of sterling gold, grateful acknowledgments, and *unqualified approbation*.—The names of the German princes, ministers of state, professors, and divines, who established and patronised the different Bible Societies, were read with triumphant intonation, in the Reports of the British and foreign Bible Society; their praises furnished an interesting topic of conversation to those who could interestingly converse on no other subject; and our Irish societies echoed these eulogies in deeper tones, and manly provincial accents. In this great concert of praise Germany had but one rival—the Emperor Alexander,—who lived long enough to encourage Bible Societies with imperial munificence, to be lauded by saints, and, afterwards, to cast them off in disgrace. Was he suspicious; did he watch them closely; and was he governed, at last, by the evidence of *facts*, and not by the

theories of enthusiasm? But have the *German saints* been yet cast off by our Bible Societies; or, are they preparing to defend those *enlightened Christians* in opposition to Mr. Rose, and a cloud of concurring evidence? There are, also, various *other points*, on which the public expect some information from these “venerable” bodies. But, on these, I am silent at present.

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## No. II.

THE following short extract from the Bishop of London's last Visitation Charge, will discover his lordship's sentiments on the subject of unqualified private judgment—the great principle of our Bible Societies, and modern German divines. He had been exhorting his Clergy to “resist” the high pretensions of the Church of Rome, and asks “how is this to be done? “*Not, surely, by retaliating misstatements, invectives, and “calumnies, or crudely asserting an unqualified right of “private judgment, but by referring to primitive antiquity,*” &c. &c.—This latter is, indeed, the only principle that can *preserve Christian truth, or the spiritual authority of a Christian Church*; and, accordingly, I am fully persuaded that the former principle, so justly condemned by his Lordship, and denounced by Mr. Rose, is *really anti-Christian*. Yet, on this basis are founded the proceedings of all the proselyting societies in Ireland. While they vainly attempt to subvert popery, they are, ignorantly, or wilfully, labouring to undermine Christianity itself. If they persevere in measures so obnoxious to the Catholic population, and so productive of bad feeling, such perseverance can only be accounted for by supposing that they mean either to extinguish the Christian religion, to excite a rebellion, or, by converting “benighted papists,” to rescue them from that eternal perdition which would otherwise be their inevitable doom. If the last and mildest supposition be adopted, how intense must be that bigotry which would con-

fine salvation exclusively to Protestants; and yet how gracious that charity, which perseveres in measures evidently tending to bloodshed and desolation, for the mere *chance* of effecting conversions, which, in the nature of things must be extremely limited, and, generally, insincere, as experience abundantly testifies? Thus, at a mighty risk, the melting charity of high Churchmen and proselyting Societies would pluck a few souls as brands from that fire, to which millions are consigned by their inhuman bigotry. What a practical illustration of the tenet of exclusive salvation!

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### No. III.

In early life, while engaged in a course of theological reading, the scriptural arguments for and against the Athanasian and Arian hypotheses, respectively, appeared, to the writer of these pages, to be so nicely balanced, that his assent fluctuated for some time, between them. But due reflection on the nature and authority of the Christian Church, fixed him in the firm belief of the Athanasian creed, to which he steadily adheres, with the exception of the damnatory clause, for which he was once a zealous advocate. But the duties of a laborious profession having ceased, for some years, time has been gained for due examination on this, and other points. He, therefore, takes the present opportunity of publicly declaring his dissent from the damnatory clause above-mentioned. This he does from conscientious motives, and with unfeigned deference to the Churches of Rome and England, whose joint authority he has often found a safe and useful guide. But, on this occasion, their influence gives way to arguments founded on reason and Scripture, which to *his* mind are irresistible; while historical evidence has convinced him that the clause in question was originally mixed up with a solemn declaration of faith by that implacable spirit of religious rancour, which, in every age,

has disgraced professing Christians. His case affords a living instance of the necessity and importance of authority to weak and erring man; and, also, it is hoped, of the legitimate exercise of private judgment, honestly but *reluctantly* and in a single instance, deciding for itself in opposition to that authority. From the introduction of the condemnatory clause into the creed, we can, however, confidently infer that the German and Bible Society principle of unqualified private judgment was disallowed by the Fathers of the Church in the early part of the fourth century. The condemnation of the Arian doctrine, unquestionably, implied a condemnation of the private judgment in whose interpretation of Scripture it originated. The assembled Fathers had undoubtedly a right to condemn the *doctrine*, but no right to consign its *teachers* to everlasting perdition. This uncharitable sentence, however, proves to demonstration, that the claims of unqualified private judgment were not only disallowed, but *regarded with horror* by the primitive Christians. How often, in the dispensations of a kind Providence, is good extracted from evil!

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#### NO. IV.

You friends of Christianity BEWARE of Bible Societies *every where*! You friends of "peace and good will among men" BEWARE of Bible Societies and other proselyting Associations, especially *in Ireland*! Remember their great principle has nearly extinguished Christianity in what is still *called* Protestant Germany. Read Mr. Rose's book: it is the result of personal observation in that country, and of an extensive perusal of the works of what are often styled the "*great German Divines*." Be wise in time, and farewell.

THE END.

ABNORMAL







